Vol. 12, No. 3 Summer 1986 $3.00

Dulcimers in Canada
Roger Nicholson
No Strings Attached
More 1986 Events
The Sunday Circle
Arrangements, News

and much more...

No Strings Attached

DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS

Vol. 12, No. 3 Summer 1986

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The *DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS* is published four times each year. Issues are mailed (via 3rd class) to subscribers in January, April, July, and October. Subscriptions in the United States are $12 per year, $21 for two years. Canada: $14 per year. Other countries (surface mail): $14, (air mail - Europe): $16, (air mail - Asia): $18. In the United States a reduced price of $8 is available for people who are unable to pay the full subscription price because of financial difficulties. Recent back issues are usually available. Cost per back issue is $3.73 in the USA (includes postage). Advertising rates are based on $20 for a 1/12 page ad, with discounts for multiple insertions. Information is available upon request.

Madeline MacNeil, Editor
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Cover Photo: No Strings Attached is a band based in the southern Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Pictured are (left to right) Bob Thomas, Pete Hastings, Wes Chappell, Suzy Gorsline, and Randy Marchany. The photography is by Jon Stephenson.

The embezzlement happened slowly—one item here, one item there. The innocents in this office never noticed. But, then again this office is built on trust. Eventually, the thief got more greedy, and missing items increased. Still puzzled, we blamed the absences on ourselves, sometimes working with subscribers as bewildered as we. Then the thief struck boldly.

While doing labels for the mailing of the spring *Dulcimer Players News,* I noticed that all of Pittsburgh was missing from the computer disc containing the zip codes beginning with 1. The enormity of the situation dawned when I went to the zip code 2 disc and found that everyone in Richmond, Virginia no longer existed! The truth came swift and hard. The computer, upon which I placed my trust, was eating names by ones and twos and, sometime between January and March, by a few dozen. That explained why a new subscriber would write saying a DPN hadn't been received when I *knew* that the information had been entered into the computer. Unraveling the mess took hours of research and double-checking against original subscription orders. Fortunately, we found most of the damage was done in Pittsburgh, PA and Richmond, VA, and we were able to add those names back to the list.

Why all of this happened, I do not know. That's why I publish a magazine rather than program computers. To those of you who had to write and inquire about your subscriptions, I'm sorry. My method of entering new subscriptions and updating existing ones is now quite different—and more time consuming. I won't totally trust computers again! I check and double check each new entry, making sure that numbers of people on the mailing list add up to the correct number when new people are added. We *do* live and learn.

I hope you don't mind the subscription price increase too much. Our costs have been going up for awhile (typesetting alone is about $1,000 a year) and I have resisted raising the price. Be assured that your extra money will be used well. One area is an increase in the amount of money paid to people who write articles and music arrangements for the magazine. There will be some other additions, and I will tell you about most of them in the fall issue. No—the DPN is not going bi-monthly, as so many of you have requested. That sure would be nice, but time to do everything is the major problem right now. Advertising rates will remain the same. The suggested low income subscription rate will rise to $8, but whatever the person can afford (down to no cost) still applies. I'm really in a quandary about rates for subscribers in other countries. You wouldn't believe the postage! Each *Dulcimer Players News* going printed matter/air mail to Japan, for example, costs $3.18—and this doesn't included the cost of the necessary envelope. With the exchange rate and the conversion cost of money in US funds, some people get priced out. It's been suggested that I make a foreign edition, printed or duplicated on thin paper, to hold down the postage cost. That option is under consideration and research.

I'm glad that some of you wrote to share your ideas about directions for *Dulcimer Players News*. I have my guiding philosophy for the focus of the magazine. I will elaborate upon all of this in the following pages when we present some of your thoughts. The forum is not closed. Please write and share with us.

I have received several inquiries about *The Dulcimist*. I understand that letters and subscription requests have been returned with no forwarding address. I have no information and know no more than you do. I do suggest, however, that you not write to the address given in back issues of DPN (classified ads). If we learn of any forwarding address or future publishing plans for *The Dulcimist,* we will let you know.

We are in need of some articles for *Dulcimer Players News*. Perhaps you've always wanted to write, but are a little shy about doing so. There are players and builders and performing groups that we'd love to hear about. The best idea is to contact us concerning your idea. Sometimes a similar article was written some years ago about which you are unaware. We can suggest either another topic or a different slant on the same topic. Write to us!

These are frightening days. Sometimes it seems as if hatred and despair will wash over us. But then we hear once more of the loving gifts of people unselfishly shared. Music is one of these gifts, and I delight in hearing of those of you who spread understanding, joy, peace, and concern through your musical talents. I hear of you often, and I remember. I feel so strongly about our power through music and the arts. This summer I wish for all of us the healing, gentle, loving, joyful, caring delights of our musical hobbies and professions.

Dulcimerrily,

Madeline MacNeil

Madeline MacNeil, Editor
Dulcimer Players News

DAD trades feuds for unifying goals

Dulcimer players who discuss (sometimes warmly) their affinity for either D-A-D or D-A-A tuning may appreciate this headline from a Hagerstown, Maryland newspaper. In this case, however, D-A-D refers, unromantically, to a Downtown Assessment District.

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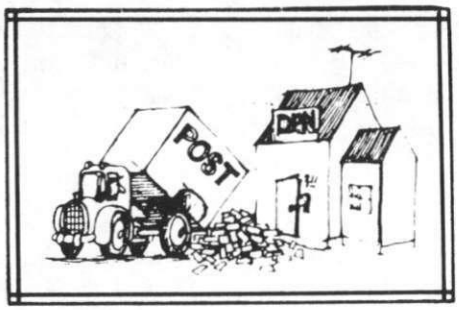


Dear DPN:

I read with great interest Merv Rowley's article about the origins of the mountain dulcimer. Regarding steel strings, pre or post 1856 there certainly were metal strings around for harpsichord and other keyboard instruments. These types of strings are being made again and many players are having their harpsichords restrung with the old hand drawn-type strings. They produce a grand tone quite different from modern strings. I'm not up on this enough to know if they are steel or not, but they are metal. I don't know if any dulcimers were around before 1856, but there were metal strings.

I was so intrigued, I went to the library and looked up wire. Indeed, there were iron wire strings of the draw process used in Europe from the 10th century onwards. Iron for wire was made by a process that produced very low carbon, high tensile strength wire. (source: *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments)*. Certainly harpsichord, harp, and fortepiano wire was pre-Bessemer.

Last winter, one cold rainy weekend, I pulled out all my old Early Music records. On the cover of one with a picture of early instruments, I noticed the tambourin a cordes. Following is a picture of the instrument with a quote from the liner notes.

Tambourin a Cordes

Tambourin a Cordes. This string drum dates at least from the 9th century; it consists basically of a long rectangular box with 2 - 5 strings along its length, although the form varies. The strings are either strummed or struck with a stick, and melodies can be played on a fretted version. Although it fell from common use at the end of the Renaissance, it still survives in many folk forms, including the mountain dulcimer.

I've probably had this Musical Heritage Society record for 15 years, but didn't notice this in my pre-dulcimer days. The album cover doesn't state who wrote the liner notes.

Jan Murphy
Statesville, NC

Dear DPN

I was particularly interested in Merv Rowley's article on the source of the Appalachian dulcimer (Winter 1986 *Dulcimer Players News)*. I found it good overall. I have to say, however, that his statement "The actual shape of the soundbox is of little real significance to the tonal qualities of the instrument, and its evolution seems to have depended upon aesthetics and local tradition more than any line of 'design improvement'." requires comment. In my years of instrument building I have come to believe that the shape of the soundbox can influence the sound of the instrument substantially.

A physics professor from the University of Minnesota told us that the dark grain lines of the sound board wood were the resonators that responded to the string vibrations. The light colored wood simply held the dark grain into a useable whole. When these dark grain lines are long (as long as the sound box, say), they tend to respond better to the longer sound waves of bass notes. When the lines are short—because they extend only across a small bout or are interrupted by sound holes—they respond better to high pitches, ie. short sound waves.

Over the years we have experimented with different soundbox shapes, sound hole placement and the shape of sound holes. We are convinced the professor had it right. We can influence the tone of the instrument substantially. The difference in sound between an hourglass shape and a teardrop shape, with other things as nearly equal as possible, can be heard by almost anyone.

Len MacEachron
Minneapolis, MN

Dear DPN:

I am a fan of traditional country music and bluegrass music. A friend in West Germany sent me a little magazine about bluegrass music and there I found your address. I read that you are much interested in traditional country music and your newspaper, Dulcimer Players News, is about pure country music. It is very good and nice of you that you keep the traditions of the beautiful real country music alive and help musicians who sing and play traditional country music and also bluegrass. It is a good and important work and I hope you keep it on.

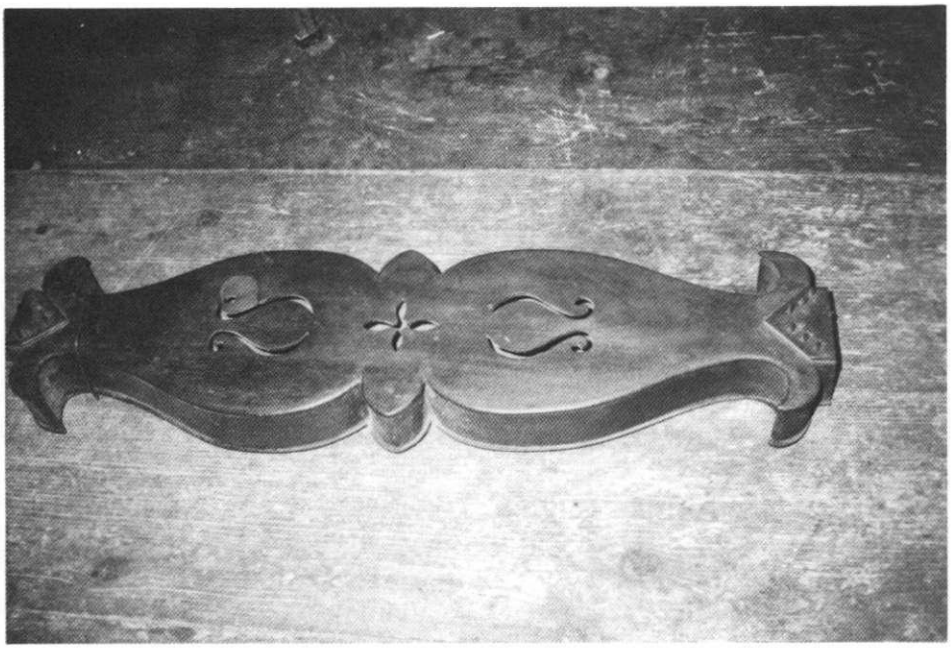
Now a little about myself. I am 23 years old. I live in the south of the German Democratic Republic—you may know it better as East Germany. I study veterinary medicine in a big city, Leipzig. From the time I heard the beautiful country music for the first time, I became a fan of it. But it is not easy to be a country music fan in East Germany because we have no country music on our radio or tv. We also have no special magazine about it and there are only a few country records available. There will be a country festival this year in our state. It is a small festival with artists from our state and Czechoslovakia performing. In East Germany there are many fans of traditional countrystyle music. I would be so happy to hear from you.

Conny Schäfer
Am Bäreuweg 10
5805 Georgeuthal
DDR (East Germany)

Music Exchange

The Music Exchange column is for people trying to find arrangements of favorite songs and tunes and sources of old music remembered from childhood. It can also include requests for out-of-print albums, musical accessories and anything else applicable to this magazine.

We still need information on plans for building a bowed psaltery and the music for *Military Two Step*.

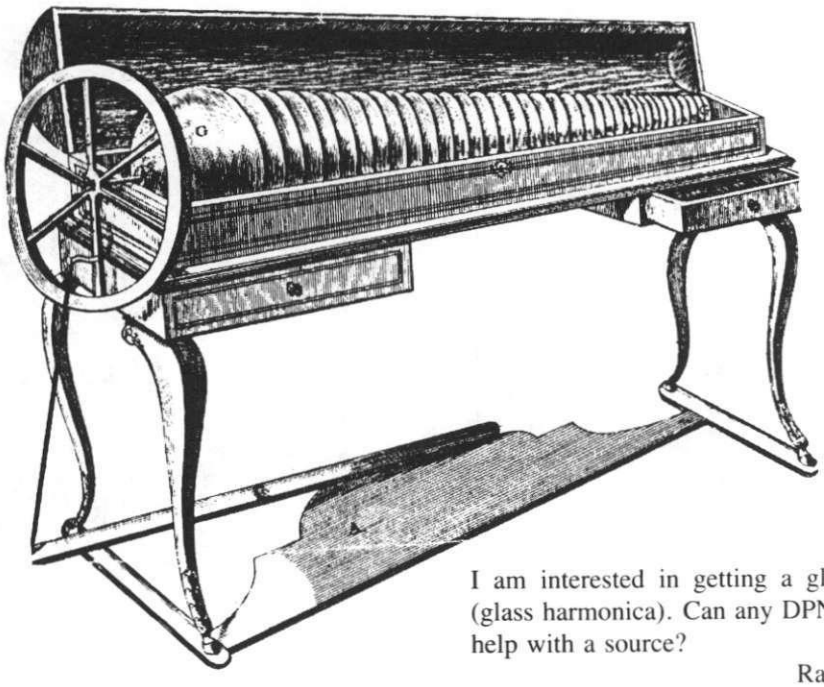


I am interested in learning more about the instrument pictured above. The "dulzither" has 6 key parts that are slotted and squared for tuning. It also has 6 nails (?) to anchor strings at both ends. It is 26½" long, 2½" thick and 6¾" at its maximum width.

The case (sides) seem to be pine, with red milk paint. The face and backboard are natural wood and appear to be mahoghany (or sandlewood).

It has a half dollar sized repair in the upper right lyre. Might it have had a bridge? It was bought along the shore in Old Lyme, Connecticut about 20 years ago.

Tom Lazor



I am interested in getting a glass harp (glass harmonica). Can any DPN readers help with a source?

Rain Emert

Do any DPN readers remember a song about *Three Leaves of Shamrock?* It is a ballad which my father sang until his death in 1970 at age 88. I am totally blank concerning a verse which must include the death of the mother on whose grave the shamrock grew.

Eulalie Kindt

I am very interested in traditional Indian and Persian music for the santur (hammered dulcimer). I would welcome any information concerning the availability of Indian or Persian instruments and hammers, as well as the name of anyone who might actually play the santur. Washington, DC area is a plus.

Walton Johnson Page, Jr.

Thank you for the information about *Eriskay Love Lilt*. For interested readers, another name for that song is *Bheir Me O*. At least that's the title by which I knew it. The answer was in my hands the entire time.

I've not been including addresses for people requesting information in the Music Exchange column. This is not some kind of censorship. We like to share answers with DPN readers. We will forward any information we receive to the questioner and possibly print answers in subsequent issues.

Partner Songs

Susan Porter, a member of the Great Black Swamp Dulcimer Club in Lima, Ohio, shared the following list of songs with the club newsletter and, thereafter, with Dulcimer Players News. The songs can be sung and played together, making a special kind of duet.

Go Tell Aunt Rhody
Buffalo Gals

On Top of Old Smoky
This Land is Your Land

Cripple Creek
John Brown's Dream

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
All Night, All Day

Rock-a My Soul
Whole World in His Hands

Yankee Doodle
Dixie

Boil That Cabbage Down
Soldier's Joy

Mary Had a Little Lamb
Rig-a-Jig-Jig

Skip To My Lou
Ten Little Indians

Shortnin' Bread
Cotton-eyed Joe

Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Where, oh, where is dear little Susie?

Club newsletters often provide us with material for Dulcimer Players News, and we are grateful for the opportunity to pass along the good information to you. The above list appeared in Volume 3, number 3 (February 1986) of the Great Black Swamp Newsletter.

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an interview with...

Roger Nicholson

by Madeline MacNeil
Hillsboro, Virginia

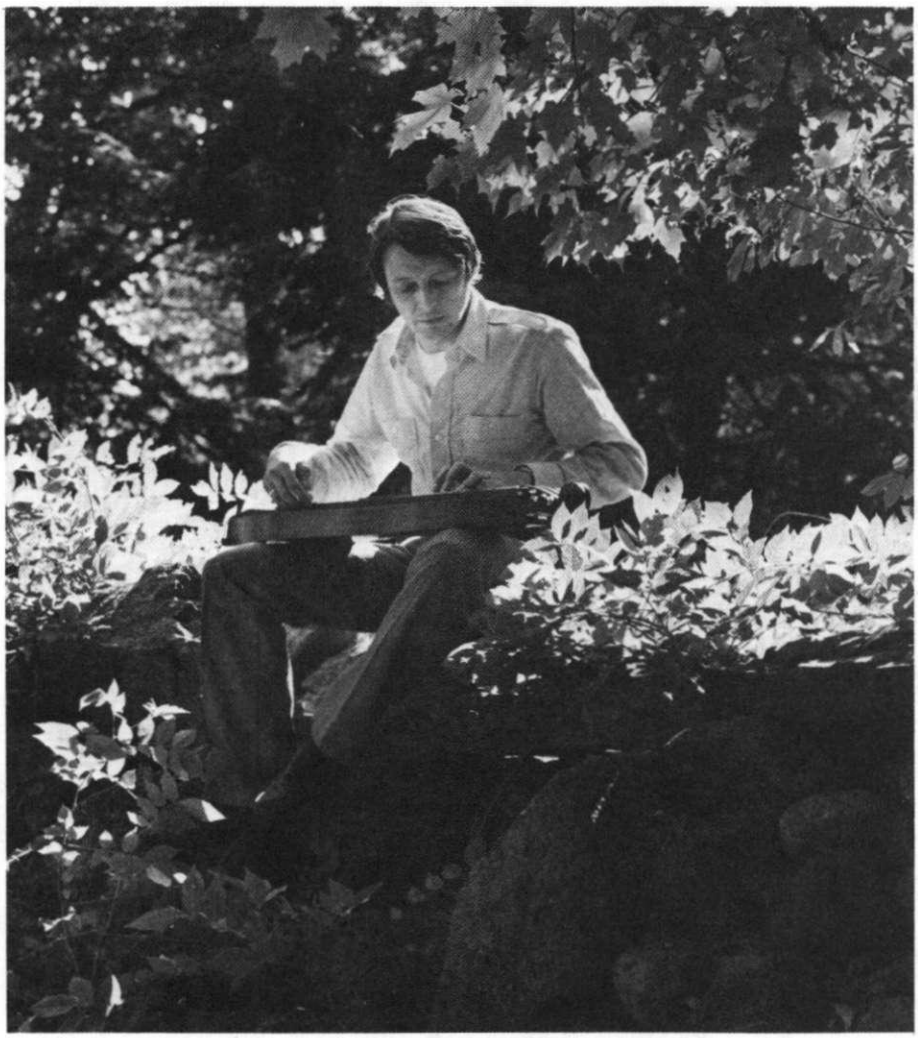


Photo: John Sheckler

What is your musical background?

I had no formal training and only became intersted in music on leaving school when I purchased a guitar. This was a direct result of hearing records by Pete Seeger and Jack Elliot as the folk revival here got underway in the mid-1960's.

Sheer impatience to play kept me from undertaking systematic study apart from a handful of basic lessons on chording. Now I have reservations about missing so much, even though I don't plan to do anything about it! On the other hand, playing by ear does seem to have some creative advantages which, curiously, are often lacking in classical musicians. I'm reminded of the late Dr. Edmond Souchon who wrote , "Sometimes, just for the love of music, untrained hands will find their way to an instrument and develop a certain amount of dexterity. Perhaps it is the sheer joy of playing that develops their ability even beyond their capabilities." To some extent this applies to me.

I've always kept the guitar going, but not in public. I play Merle Travis-style rags and blues which give me a total contrast with the dulcimer repertoire.

When and how did you discover the fretted dulcimer?

In 1968 I first encountered a dulcimer played at a folk festival by a visiting American. The sound and appearance made a great impression on me and shortly afterwards I had one made by Frank Bond in London. Within a few months I became hooked and decided to make it my main instrument.

At that time few dulcimer records existed except rare imports by Jean Ritchie. I enjoyed these, but not being any kind of singer, regretfully, accompaniments were not my direction. As a fingerstyle guitarist I naturally approached the dulcimer similarly. Not knowing any other players, there were no models or influences. The exception was Howie Mitchell whose records I heard later. His playing has always been an inspiration. We corresponded and eventually met in Washington, DC in 1980.

For several years I'd had an interst in Elizabethan music, particularly that written for lute and keyboards. I felt the dulcimer's tone ideally suited this music, so began to arrange some of the easier pieces. Becoming aware of modes for the first time set me off in other listening directions such as Medieval, Arabian, Indian, etc., all of which had an identity with traditional British music and the dulcimer. Bits of this music rubbed off, making me an ecclectic pirate!

As most of what I was playing had been adapted from other sources, some of which worked and some did not, I began to put together some tailor-made pieces. These compositions are very much of the apastiche variety and number about twelve in all. At different times friends have suggested adding extra strings or frets, but I like the dulcimer as it is—and I already have a guitar. In fact, I've never used a 6½ fret or more than the four or five tunings from Jean's book. Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to wise!

What dulcimers do you play?

I have the dulcimer by Frank Bond that I mentioned, an American Sunhearth which is particuarly responsive for fingerstyle playing, and an Australian "Stradivarius" by Bill Docherty who sent it as a present six years ago. He makes very few dulcimers and each is a work of art. All of the dulcimers are set up with three individual strings which I prefer for its clarity. For playing fiddle tunes with a flatpick I often use a double first course on the Docherty.

Tell us about your tours and recordings.

Music has always been just a pastime and I never intended it to get out of hand as it did. In 1972 Bill Leader asked me to record for his new folk label. I did with help from Robert Johnson, just prior to his joining Steeleye Span. As a result, invitations came in from clubs and festivals and I teamed up with Jake Walton to do these. The publisher EMI did the first of two tablature books, followed by a record offer and the chance to tour in France and Belgium. This all took on a life of its own and I got carried along. The high spot came in 1979 when Lorraine Lee kindly set up the first of three United States tours. These were a real revelation. You must remember that I hardly ever saw other players, so the experience of meeting so many and of playing at dulcimer festivals was amazing. We recorded for Front Hall and later Lorraine and I played for Jean Ritchie's Greenhays label.

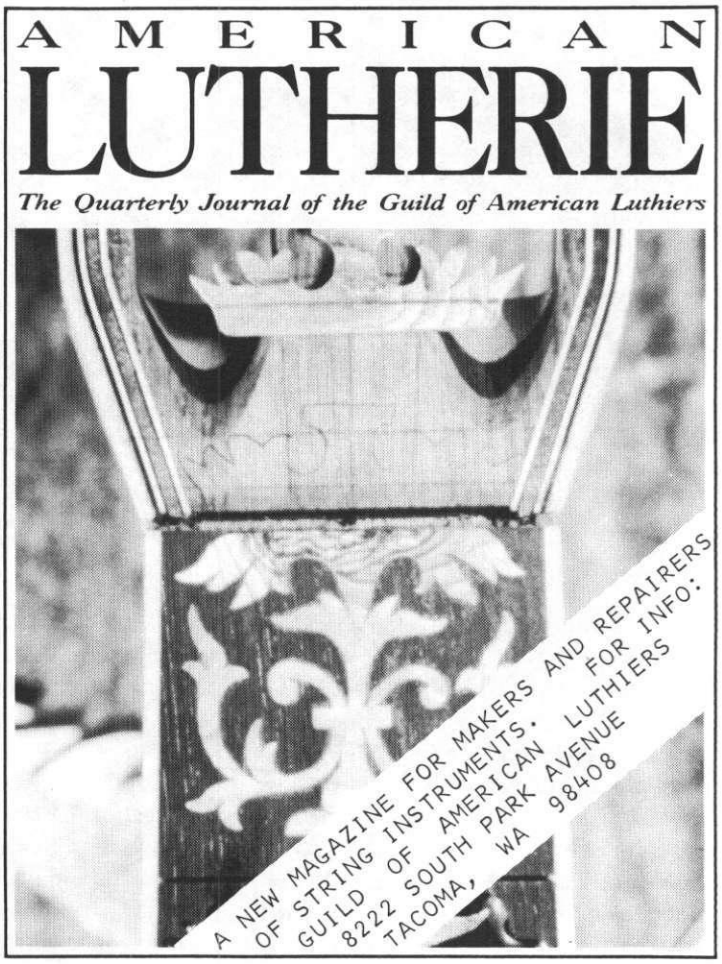
We'd enjoy hearing about the dulcimer in Britain.

Dulcimers have been used here by some folk singers since the 1950's as a direct result of Jean Ritchie's early visits. But, unlike her, players only featured it for an occasional song, generally with a basic strum. During the 1970's folk rock era, several bands had electric dulcimers and Joni Mitchell used one on stage. But the dulcimer was short-lived and never caught on. As a result, audiences do not know its possibilities and people have no incentive to take it up. It's a rare exception to find a dulcimer workshop at a festival here.

Another example of the dulcimer gap between the USA and us can be illustrated by the fact that in over fifteen years of playing Lorraine Lee has taught literally hundreds of people in classes and individually. During a similar period I've had no more than ten pupils.

How do you create your dulcimer arrangements?

The problem in adapting music to the dulcimer is that it is not possible to play exactly what was written for a multi-stringed chromatic instrument. To be convincing, the important things seems to be stylistic approaches to the arrangement. For instance, *Greensleeves* could be played chordally or with arpeggios, but neither would sound authentic. Lute versions have moving bass lines, sparse harmony notes and all kinds of variation and decoration. By listening to the real thing, keeping these criteria in mind, it's not too difficult to produce a piece that sounds right and is fun to play.



I'm including a tablature of *The Farewell Pavan* which I wrote sometime ago to create a kind of Elizabethan counterpoint feel. It is slow, but involves a busy left hand for the moving parts.

What are your future plans?

For twelve years I used all my free time touring and recording while having a full-time job—all a far cry from my real amateur intentions. In 1983 I decided to retire and just do the occasional workshop and trickle of private teaching. I miss contact with other players and the American "all singing-all dancing" dulcimer scene, so hope to get back in the near future in a limited way. Meanwhile I play as much as ever, without the commitment, and devote more space to my other main interest, cycle touring.

Folk Festivals in England

Roger shared addresses for some folk festivals in England. Next year we will try to include information about these festivals in our spring Events Calendar.

Whitchurch Folk Festival/6 Kintyre Close, Oakley, Basingstoke, Hants, England. (Tel: Basingstoke 781954). This year's festival happens September 5 -7.

Whitby Folk Week/c/o Malcolm Storey, 26 Marine Ave., North Ferriby, East Yorkshire, HU14-3DR, England. 1986's festival happens August 16-22.

15th Durham City Folk Festival/c/o Mike & Jean Longstaff, 19 Front St., Durham, England. (Tel: 0385-44445). 1986 festival is August 1 - 3.

Warwick Folk Festival/c/o Frances Dixon, 13 Styvechale Ave., Earlsdon, Coventry, CV5-6DW, England. (Tel: 0203-78738). 1986 festival is August 1 - 3.

Cornwall Folk Festival/c/o Sue Millington, 145 Hillside Park, Bodmin, PL31-2NQ, England. 1986 festival is August 23 - 25.

Cropredy Festival/P.O. Box 37, Banbury, Oxon, OX15-4BH, England. 1986 festival is August 8 - 9.

Pondardawe Festival/Tourist Information Centre, Singeton St., Swansea, England. (Tel: 0792-468321). 1986 festival is August 15 - 17.

9th Dartmoor Folk Festival/c/o Mrs. M. Kiely, 18 Pikes Mead, Okehampton, Devon, England. 1986 festival is August 8 - 10.

Broadstairs Folk Week/c/o Pam Porritt, Flat 2, 12 Victoria Parade, Broadstairs, Kent, England. 1986 festival is August 8 - 15.

Holford Arms Festival/c/o Maggie, 4 Pitchcombe, Yate, Bristol, England. 1986 festival is August 15 - 17.

22nd Cambridge Folk Festival/ Cambridge City Council, Amenities and Recreation Dept., Kett House, Station Road, Cambridge, CB1-2JX, England. 1986 festival is August 1 - 3.

10th Kendal Folk Festival/Brewery Arts Centre, Highgate, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9-4HE, England. 1986 festival is the August Bank Holiday Weekend.

Bromyard Folk Festival/P.O. Box 6, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8-2YJ, England. (Tel: 053-183-593). 1986 festival is September 19 - 20.

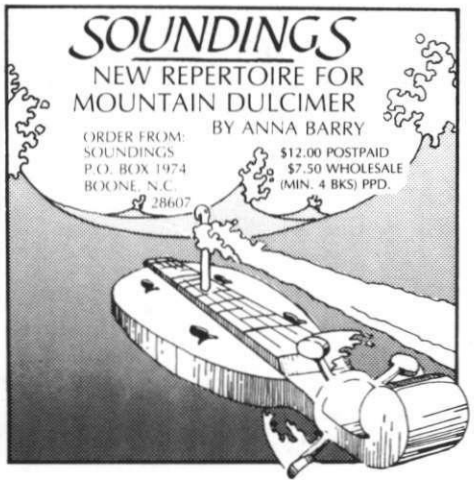
22nd Towersey Village Festival/ Glorishears, Thame, Oxon, OX9-3LP, England. (Tel: Thame, 084-421-2231.) 1986 festival is August 22 - 25.

14th Fylde Folk Festival/Alan Bell, 55 The Strand, Fossall, Fleetwood FY7-8NP. (Tel: 03917-2317). 1986 festival is August 29 - 31.

13th Trowbridge Folk Festival/Judy King, 5 Lower East Hayes, London Rd., Bath BA1-6PL, England. 1986 festival is July 18 - 21.

32nd Sidmouth Festival/30 The Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon EX10-8HL. (Tel: 03955-5134). 1986 festival is August 1 - 8.

We are always looking for events to expand our yearly Calendar. This includes information for our readers in other countries as well as for travelers from the United States. Please enlighten us and keep us posted.



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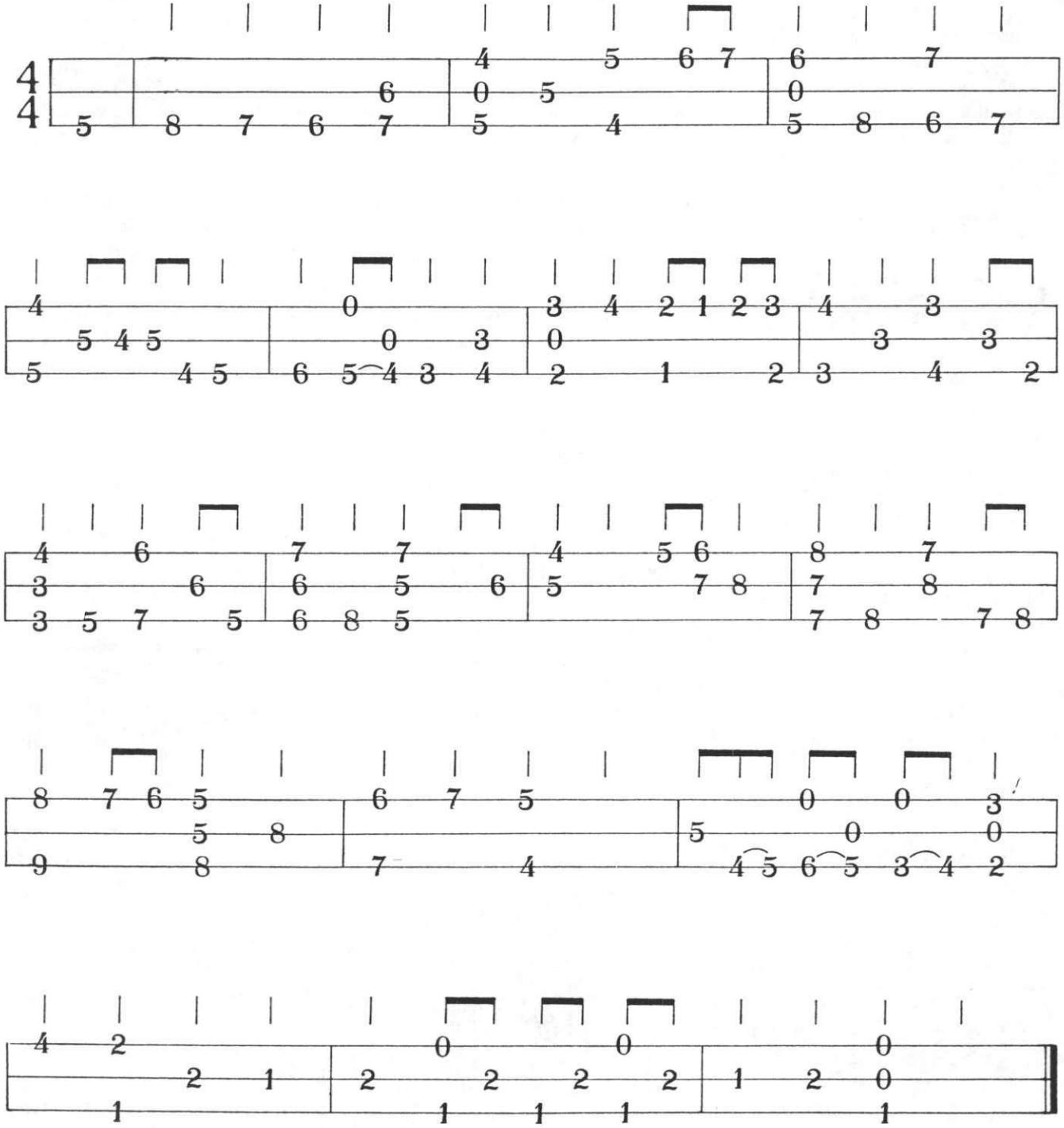
The Farewell Pavan
(For a-leavetaking)

by Roger Nicholson
London, England

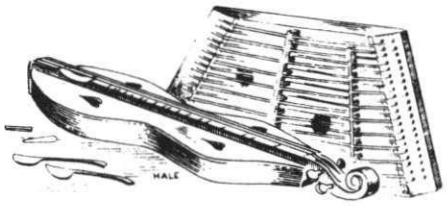
Tune D - A - C
Slow tempo



This pavan imitates the kind of counterpoint heard in Elizabethan lute music. Play it slowly (and sadly!) with careful phrasing and left-hand fingering to sustain notes.

The Answer Column

Sam Rizzetta
Inwood, WV



This question and answer column deals with building, playing, and caring for dulcimers (both kinds). Questions are invited. Please address them to this column in care of DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS. Note that limitations of space and time may make it impossible to respond to every inquiry. I will not be able to make responses other than as time allows in this column. Questions of general interest to the readership will get priority.

I play a single bridge 9-course dulcimer tuned in fourths (see fig. 1). Do you have any suggestions for getting the most out of this instrument and how I could best tune for quickest key changes? I briefly experimented with moving the separate bridge pieces to sharpen a note when needed, and also raised each course one note to play in the key of D.

Your dulcimer is perfectly adequate. Some very nice music has been played on just such instruments, which you well know if you've heard Russell Fluharty of Mannington, West Virginia play. However, the range, number of keys and chromatic notes are severely limited.

Your tuning, (fig. 1), permits playing only in the key of C and the relative minor, Am. If you change the tuning slightly (fig. 2.), the high E note can be sacrificed to add the ability to play in the key of G. Since you recently retuned to play in the key of D, I presume you would rather play more in that key than in C, perhaps to be in tune with other instruments to play D dance tunes or for a better key for singing and matching your vocal range. Raising the tuning in fig. 2 one step provides the keys of D, Bm, and A. Also available is the Mixolydian modal scale in A, which is very important for playing some of the old time, mournful mountain tunes. If your goal is to play old time and square dance-type tunes that are so popular on the dulcimer, then it would be ideal to add the key of G to the capabilities of the fig. 3 tuning. In fact, this can be easily done by starting the D-A scales at the second course instead of the first and adding in a low G note. This is going back to string tensions similar to your original tuning (fig. 1) and will be less strain on your dulcimer. The keys available in the fig. 4 tuning are the ones most used in traditional American dulcimer playing and for old time music with fiddle, banjo, and guitar. You have also gained a few chromatic notes which expand the kinds of music that can be played without any retuning or moving of bridges.

Fifth interval dulcimers with bass bridges are far more versatile, but you now have greatly increased capability without changing dulcimers.

	E - B
	D - A
Keys	C - G
C	A - E
Am	G - D
	F - C
	E - B
Fig. 1	D - A
	C - G

	D - A
	C - G
Keys	B - F#
C	A - E
Am	G - D
G	F - C
G modal	E - B
	D - A
Fig. 2	C - G

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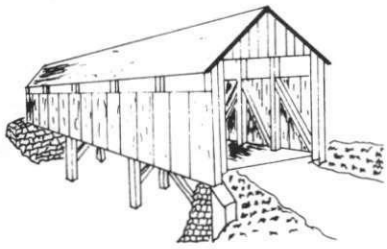

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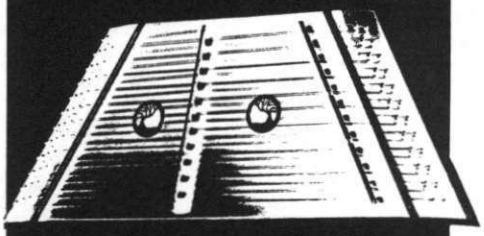

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	E - B
Keys	D - A
D	C# - G#
Bm	B - F#
A	A - E
A modal	G - D
	F# - C#
Fig. 3	E - B
	D - A

	D - A
Keys	C# - G#
D	B - F#
Bm	A - E
A	G - D
A modal	F# - C#
G	E - B
	D - A
Fig. 4	C - G

I have made a few mountain dulcimers and some were easier to play than others. How does one adjust the string tension on a mountain dulcimer?

There are a number of things that influence string tension and playing ease. What you are probably looking for are ways to reduce the effort required to fret the strings, or the resistance of the strings to finger pressure.

1. Tune to lower pitch or decrease scale length.
2. Use lighter gauge strings.
3. Lower playing action. In other words, lower the height of the string above the fretboard. Adjust height at nut and saddle. I like the nut to be as low as the frets, or, perhaps, just 1/64" higher.

All of the above items will also reduce how hard you can play the strings without buzzing on the frets, and they will change the intonation. Theoretically, the saddle position would have to be moved very slightly for the isntrument to fret perfectly in tune. In practice you may not notice much of a problem. Additionally, slightly longer scale lengths with correspondingly lower tunings may feel easier to fret. Such things as the responsiveness and dynamic range of an instrument will have minor influence on subjective "feel", as will the frets. Wider frets feel easier on longer scale lengths. Contrary to some common

practice, I prefer wide frets on the usual full size fretted dulcimer, 28″ to 30″ string vibrating length.

Perhaps the most common reason for some dulcimers playing harder than others is a fretboard that is not straight and level to a sufficient degree. A fretboard that bows downward in the middle is likely to give a hard playing action in the middle fret range. One that bows upward will play hard in the highest and, perhaps, lowest range of a given string. Take extra care with this in building. Check the dulcimer for straight fretboard with an accurate metal straight edge. Better yet, sight down the edge of the fretboard. If you place the peghead end near your eye and point the other end of the dulcimer toward a light and away from you, it is very easy to see even the slightest bow or warp. If it is less than flat, it is not as good as it could be. Some players say they actually prefer a slight downward bow in the middle. This may be all right for some pick and noter playing, but fingerstyle playing is much simpler for me if the fretboard is level. The less straight the fingerboard, the higher you must have the strings to keep from buzzing—and the harder it is to play.

Hand in hand with all of this is getting the frets perfectly level and of uniform height. If the fretboard is level but the frets aren't, the strings will again have to be higher than necessary and things are not as easy as they could be. I use a long, flat mill file to dress the frets after installation and the entire dulcimer is fully assembled. Keep checking with your eye and the metal straight-edge. Note when filing that some frets may not be showing filing marks. These are the low ones. Until the file is taking something off all frets, they are not level. After leveling, frets are rounded with a fret file and polished with extra fine sandpaper. Take care not to overuse the fret file and lower some frets too much. It is all right, preferable in fact, for the frets to remain slightly flat on top.

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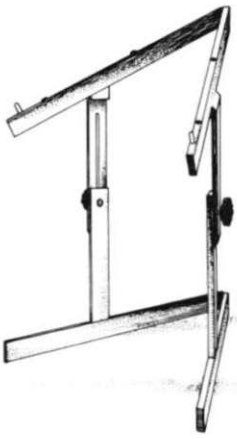

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Learning New Tunes

by Music and by Ear

Lucille Reilly
Moorestown, New Jersey

Many hammered dulcimer players shy away from reading music to learn fiddle tunes, mainly because it's difficult to look at the music and the dulcimer at the same time. Some of these players prefer to play by ear, a time-honored tradition of folk music, rather than learn a melody from paper. Yet music reading and playing by ear make an unbeatable combination which speeds up the learning process and still allows for creativity.

I've used the following method ever since I got my dulcimer. It takes me no more than 10 minutes to learn a tune - memorizing, hammering, everything. I can't guarantee exactly the same time frame for you, but if it took you two weeks to learn a tune before and it takes two hours with this method, then I'd say that's quite an improvement. For those of you just starting out, what follows is a great short-cut. Many first-time players, and non-readers at that, have improved not only their learning time, but their playing of the dulcimer and general understanding of it, so I'm convinced that you can do the same. If you can read music, so much the better.

The secret to learning music from paper is to learn the melody first and then play it on the dulcimer while you still remember it, instead of reading and playing all at the same time. Here's the procedure:

1: *Sight-sing the melody or listen to the melody with the written music at hand.*

Whichever way you choose, you'll achieve the same result: you'll be learning the tune by ear. It's an intellectual learning, though, because your eyes will be helping out. But that's even better than only hearing the melody; you can see its direction at the same time and learn it faster. Sight-singing (looking at the music and singing it without hearing it beforehand) is especially beneficial because if you can sing a tune, you really know it! I recommend that nonreaders eventually sing along with recordings of the tunes they're learning, even if it means locking themselves inside a closet to spare the ears of others nearby.

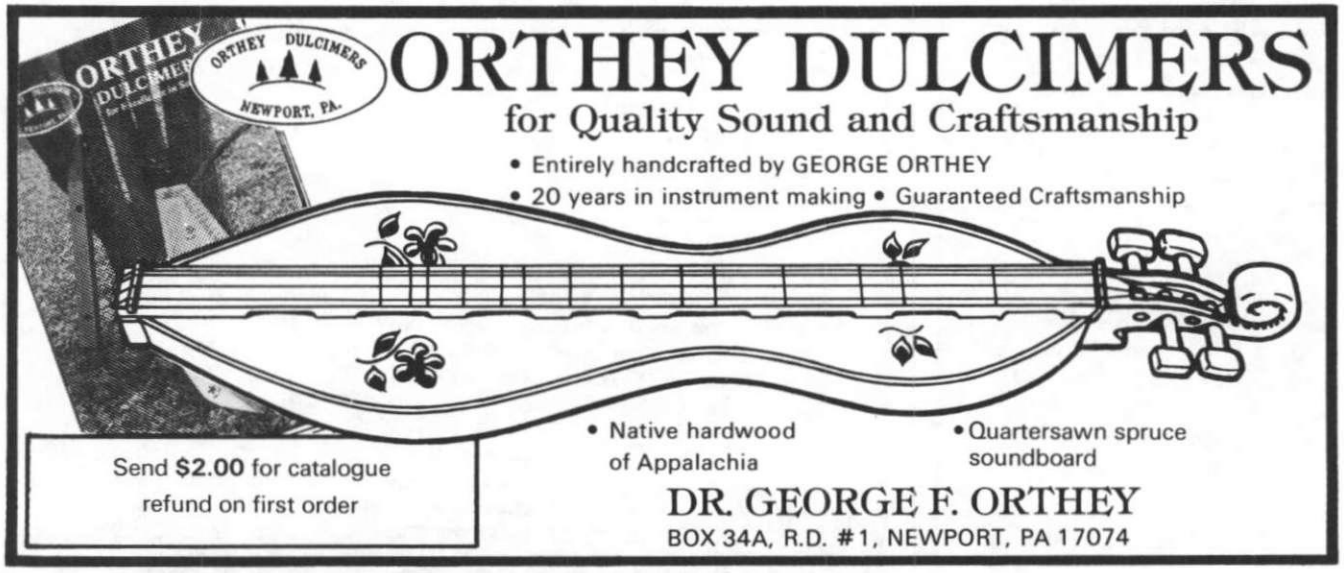
If you play another instrument fairly well, you can play the tune first on that instrument to learn it. But then go back and sing the melody to be sure of it.

2. *When you have memorized the melody, go to the dulcimer and play it.*

Now you can play the tune by ear, armed with something extra: an understanding of the direction of the melodic line from seeing it on paper. This reduces the need for trial and error on the strings. Since the dulcimer carries only the necessary notes for fiddle tunes (you can't play an E accidentally if there isn't one nearby to play), it should be a simple matter to listen to your "inner voice" and play what you hear.

Refer to the music if necessary to review any parts of the melody that you may have forgotten.

If you've followed this method faithfully and still find the hammering difficult,



practice the stroking by tapping out the rhythm with your hands on any flat surface. Imagine the layout of the dulcimer and move your hands to the areas shown in the music to feel the way the hammers travel on the dulcimer. Sing or hum the melody and refer to the music as you tap so that the correct strokes will fall in all the right places. This makes it easier to work out troublesome patterns without the frustration of striking incorrect pitches.

Here are some more pointers to help you as you learn:

1. *Look for any melodic similarities in the phrases of a tune.*

   A phrase is generally 4 measures long. Phrases in music are either identical, similar or different, so two phrases in a tune which look the same on paper will, of course, sound the same. Because fiddle tunes are notorious for melodic repetition, learning one phrase can often mean learning at least half of the tune.

2. *Look for long fragments or entire sections of a tune played on one side of the treble bridge or the bass bridge.*

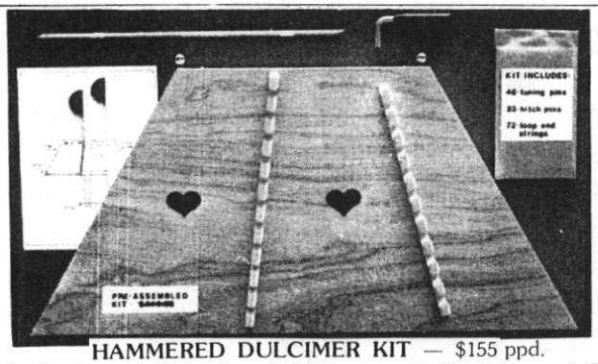
   If you know that the entire B section of *Soldier's Joy* is played in second position (i.e., the left side of the treble bridge), you can then direct your concentration on the melody, rather than worrying about both the melody and the position.

3. *If you opt for sight-singing to learn fiddle tunes, learn as much as you can about reading rhythm. Rhythm is more difficult to interpret than the direction of the melodic line.*

   The most enjoyable way to accomplish this is to join a church choir or community chorus. Other good resources are church musicians, school music instructors, a local conservatory or the music department of a nearby college.

4. *If the key of a tune is out of your singing range, raise or lower the octave until you can sing all the pitches with ease.*

5. *Take your time, and listen to what you're doing.*



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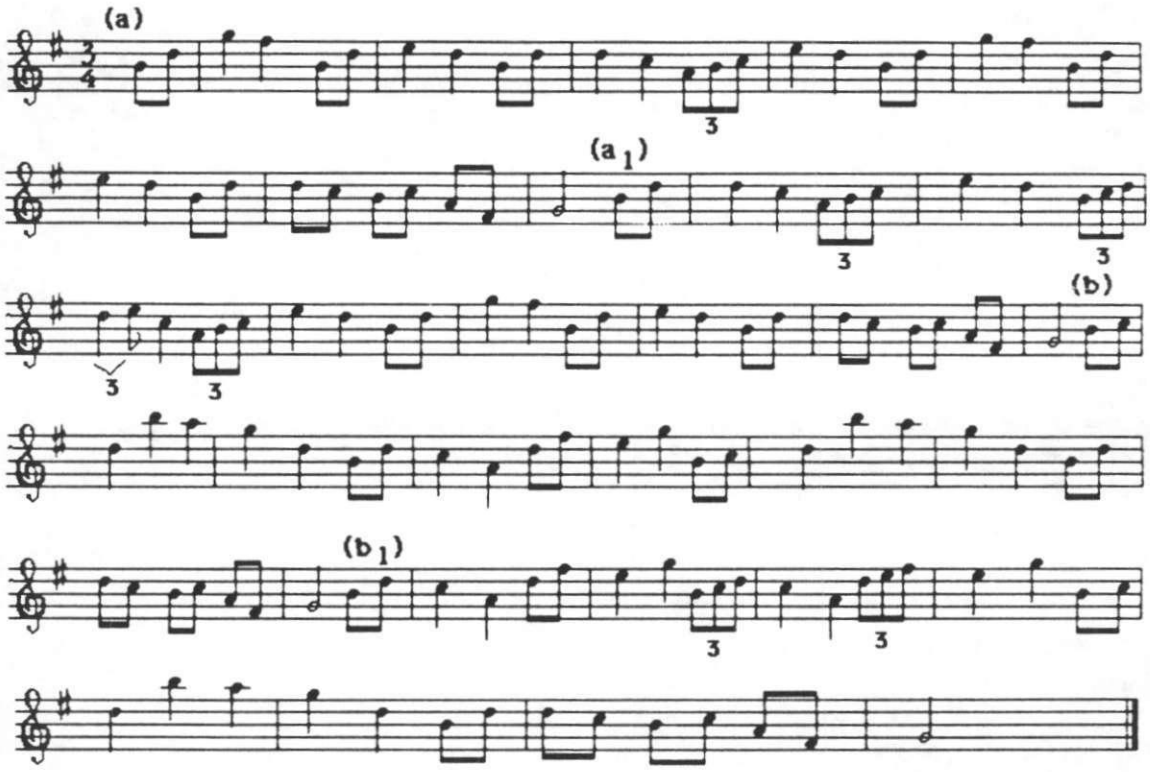

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REVIEWS

Angel's Draught/Carrie Crompton, Hepatica Music, 119 Clover Rd., State College, PA 16801.

This lovely tape is everything one would expect from Carrie Crompton's second release: good ensemble, charming arrangements and fine playing (Carrie on hammered dulcimer and viol, Celia Wyckoff on recorders, and Mike Rose on guitar). The real-time cassette opens with a thoroughly satisfying arrangement of *Dawning of the Day,* and continues with a fine variety of traditional, Baroque and Renaissance tunes. Barolk Folk is an apt name for the group, as it's a perfect description of their approach to the music. Hammered dulcimer is featured, solo and in ensemble, in nearly three-quarters of the tape.

The recording quality is very good, the cover art lovely, and my only criticism is the absence of liner notes. I know extra panels on a J-card cost money (boy, do I know), but in this case I feel the music deserves a word or two of scholarly information, which I'm sure an artist of Carrie's obvious abilities and level of commitment could easily provide. Highly recommended.

Joemy Wilson

The Good Old Colony Days/Linda Russell, 250 W. 99th, #8-C, New York, NY 10025.

This reviewer envies Linda her ability to make a living doing what she enjoys—being a balladeer for the National Park Service. Linda is backed up by Richard Patterson, Ridley Enslow, and Mark Lanci on this album.

The subtitle is Music of the Eighteenth Century. The music is clearly performed with an understanding and respect for the peoples of the past. There is thorough attention to detail: i.e. costumes, a lyric sheeet with additional notes, a list of songbook sources, and Linda's charming pen-and-ink illustrations.

The album presents a wide range of moods and tempos. The number of vocals is balanced with the instrumentals. The instruments complement each other well, as do the solo and harmony vocals. The tasteful arrangements never overshadow the vocal lines, no matter how fragile the lyrics.

My favorites are the dance tune *Haste to the Wedding* and the military tunes *Dog and Gun* and *Road to Boston*. The military tunes bring battlefields, encampments and wood smoke vividly to mind. The three love songs *Buttermilk Hill, The Water is Wide,* and *Seeds of Love* are fantastic.

This is an excellent album. I hope to see it used in music, literature, and history classes for educational purposes. Advisably historical festivals and organizations interested in preserving the culture of the Revolutionary era will utilize this album. In addition, it makes for fine entertainment.

Deborah T. Baird

Insurance

If you sit on your dulcimer or it disappears at a festival, will your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy pay for it? Maybe yes, maybe no! Want to make sure? Here's how.

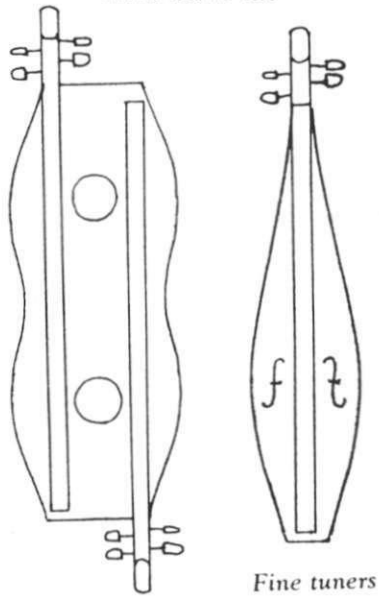
1. Make out a list of all your musical instruments including cases and accessories (don't forget tuners).
2. Send this fully descriptive list to your homeowner's or renter's insurance agent and ask him or her to add it as a personal property rider to your house insurance policy. Make sure that you let the agent know that you are not a full-time professional musician and that you want all-risk coverage. Your cost shouldn't be more than $25 annually.
3. Here's the way to list: Chet Hines walnut and spruce fretted dulcimer w/hard case—$450.

Don McCoy
Dayton, OH

This information also appeared in the newsletters for the Dayton and Lima, Ohio dulcimer clubs. It is reprinted with permission.

Appalachian Dulcimers

Hancrafted by Keith K. Young
3815 Kendale Road, Annandale, Virginia 22003
Phone: 703/941-1071



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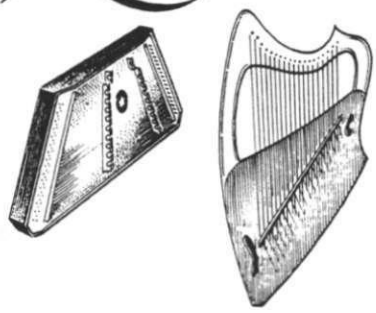


Over 20 years of research & innovation. The largest line of dulcimers, including sopranos, chromatics, bass & cymbalom. Also fretted dulcimers & the all new Rizzetta Butterfly Harp! Records & tapes, too. For information write to;

Rizzetta, Dept DPN
PO Box 510
Inwood, WV 25428

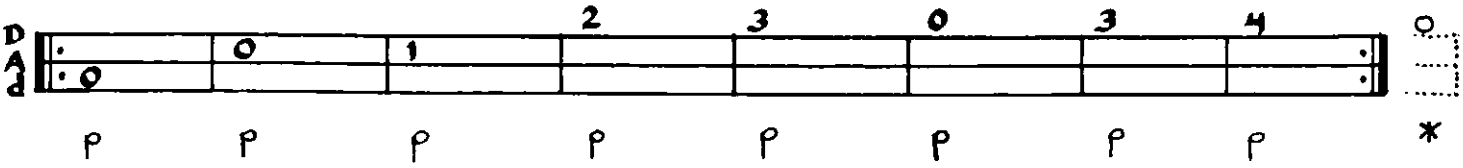
Pachelbel's *Canon in D*

arr. Paul Furnas
Palo Alto, California

The notes marked * are played only at the end of the piece, when all players should end simultaneously. The light tablature numbers in the canon indicate alternate frets (for dulcimers that don't have the 6½ fret).

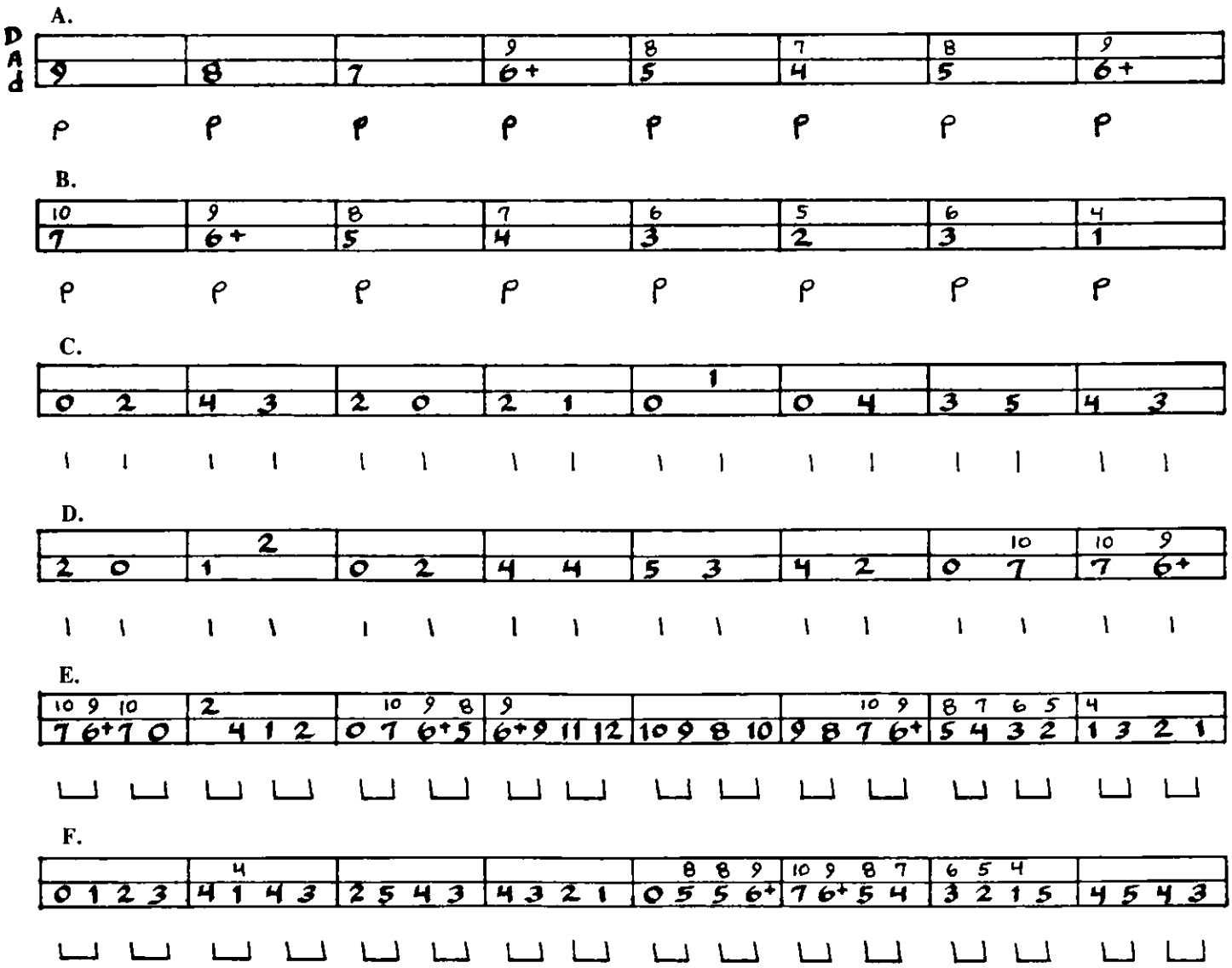
The Ground Bass

One dulcimer plays this ground bass over and over while one or more other dulcimers play either the canon itself or improvise with ideas from the canon.



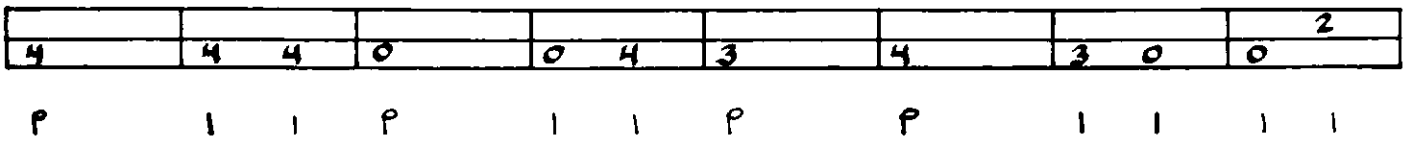
The Canon

The official way to play the canon is for three dulcimers to play it as a round, while a fourth dulcimer plays the ground over and over. Another enjoyable approach is for one or more dulcimers to play various lines from the canon (or even to improvise) while another dulcimer repeatedly plays the ground bass.



The optional variations G, H, I, and J may be inserted at this point in the canon. Variations K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, and R have been omitted from this edition.

S.



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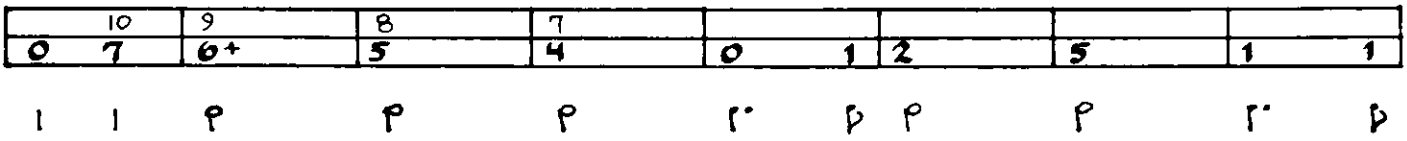

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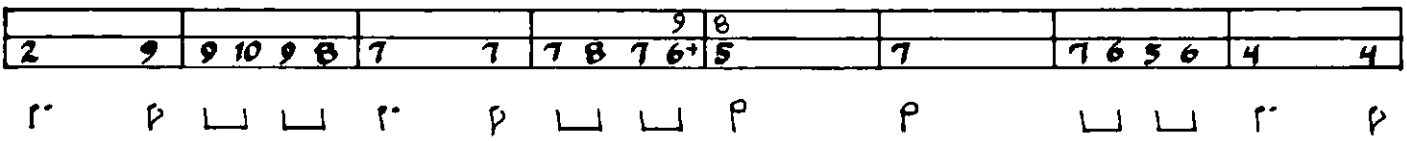

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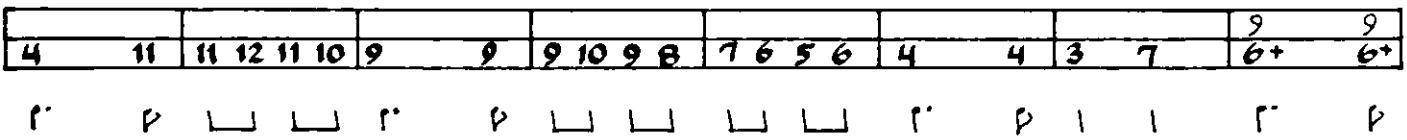

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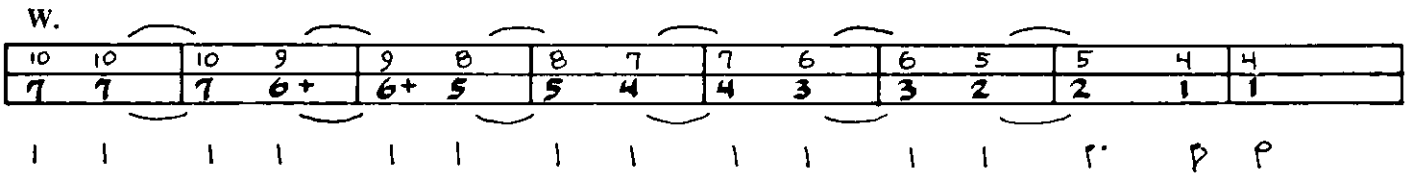

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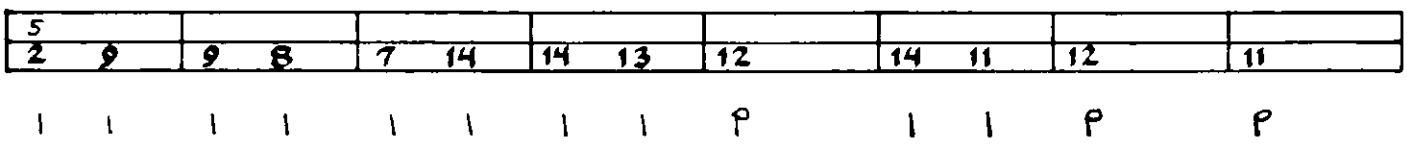

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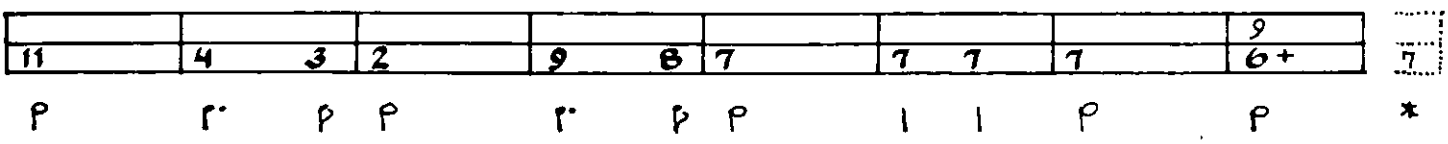

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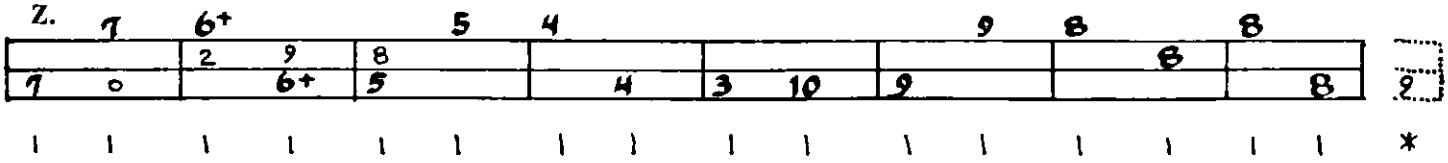

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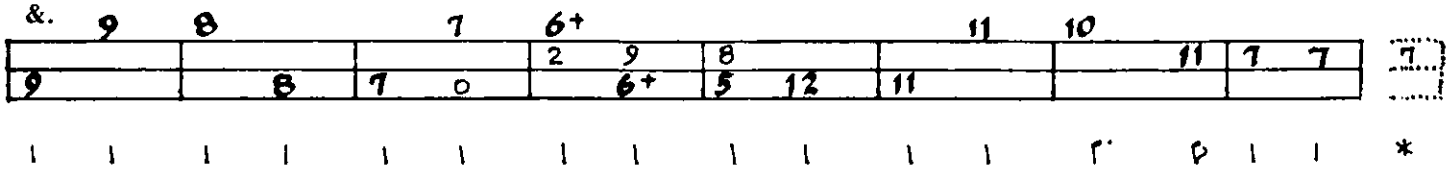


Notes on Pachelbel's *Canon*

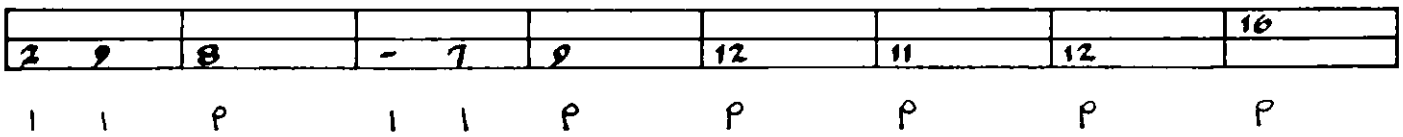
The *Canon in D* by Johann Pachelbel (1653 - 1706) consists of twenty-seven variations that are played over a ground bass. A ground bass is a slow bass line that is used as a framework for improvisations by Renaissance or Baroque musicians, not unlike the way in which jazz musicians use chord progressions such as the Twelve-bar Blues. This edition for fretted dulcimers includes the first ten (A to J) and the final nine (S to &) of Pachelbel's original twenty-seven variations.

Although Pachelbel's great trick in this piece was to arrange the variations so that they also function as a round for three instruments, he had a few other tricks up his sleeve as well. The canon actually consists of *pairs* of variations—notice how similar the rhythm and melodic lines are in variations A-B, variations C-D, variations E-F, etc. These pairs create and control the canon's texture (slow vs fast, plain vs ornate, etc.). As the three instruments proceed through the canon, the texture changes continually (but never abruptly). When the three instruments are playing variations B-C-D, the prevalent texture is from the C-D pair while B provides a slow counterpoint. On the next pass (C-D-E) the prevalent texture is still from the C-D pair, but this time there is a fast counterpoint from the E variation, which is preparing the way for the next change in texture. On the subsequent pass (D-E-F) the prevalent texture finally shifts to that of the faster E-F pair while variation D now provides a moderate counterpoint.

Optional Variations

These variations may be inserted after variation F. Don't worry about turning the page back and forth because variations I-J are so fast that you will have to memorize them in order to play them at their proper speed. The function of G-H is to provide a buffer between the fast texture of E-F and the very ornate texture of I-J, so if you want to play I-J, be sure to include G-H as well. Memorizing G-H will be a snap after you have memorized I-J.

G.



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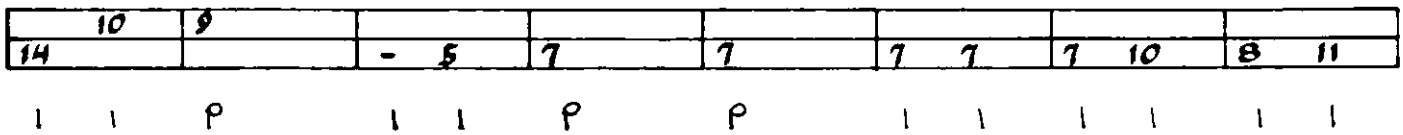

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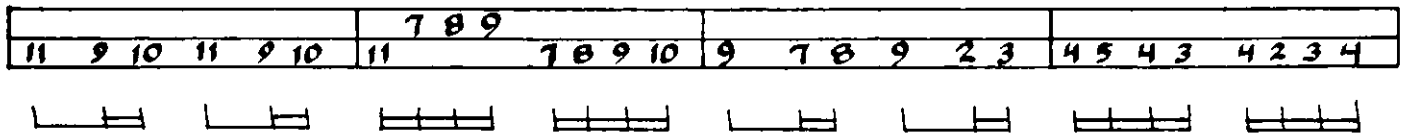

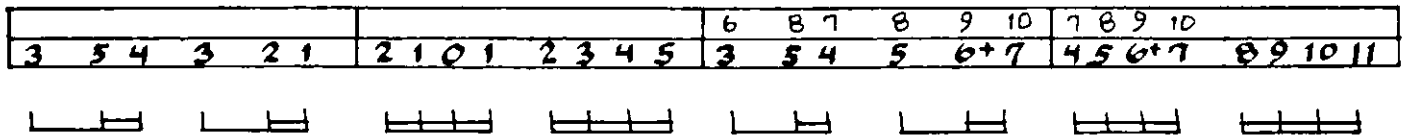

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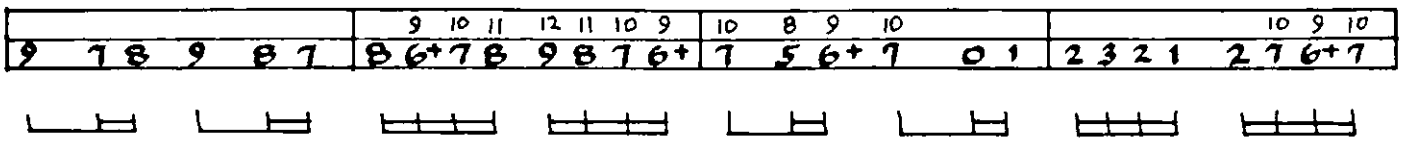
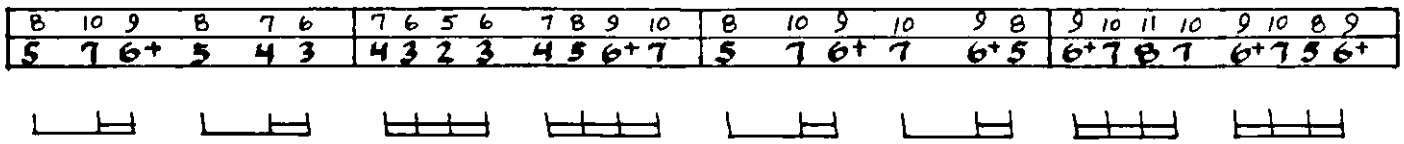




1986 Events Calendar
Late Summer/Fall Edition

July 13-August 17 Elkins, WV

14TH AUGUSTA HERITAGE ARTS WORKSHOP is a five week program in music, dance, folklore and crafts of Appalachia. Courses available in fretted and hammer dulcimer. The Augusta Festival is August 15-17. Info: Augusta Workshops, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241. 304/636-1903.

July 26-27 Kirtland Hills, OH

The 2nd annual LITTLE MOUNTAIN FOLK FESTIVAL, held at the Lake County History Center, features hammer and fretted dulcimer stage performances and workshops along with a variety of other traditional instruments. Shadetree jam sessions prevail. Info: Eric Cardinal, 216/255-8979 (days) 216/256-3537 (evenings).

July and August Ashokan, NY

The FIDDLE AND DANCE WORKSHOP will sponsor 4 weeks of music and dancing at the Ashokan Field Campus of the State Un. of NY. Bunkhouse or campsite accommodations. Northern week/July 14-20, Southern Week/July 26-Aug. 1, Western and Swing Week/Aug. 3-9, and Open Week/Aug. 11-17. Info: Fiddle and Dance, RD 1, Box 48, West Hurley, NY 12491. 914/338-2996.

July 28-Aug. 3 Louisville, KY

The 11TH ANNUAL KENTUCKY MUSIC WEEKEND will feature a week of instruction in fretted and hammer dulcimers, Autoharp, building pocket instruments, and dance, in addition to the festival. The festival itself is Aug. 1-3 and will include concerts, workshops, and dances. Info: Nancy Barker, Box 651, Bardstown, KY 40004. 502/348-5237.

July 31-August 3 Tacoma, WA

The 10TH NATIONAL CONVENTION for the Guild of American Luthiers will be held at Pacific Lutheran Un. in Tacoma. Activities include lectures and exhibitions. Info: Guild of American Luthiers, 8222 S. Park Ave., Tacoma, WA 98408.

August ? In The West

We've not received word about this year's KINDRED GATHERING for fretted dulcimer players, builders and enthusiasts. It traditionally features workshops and performing in addition to the general camaraderie. For information, we suggest you contact Susan Howell, Box 1424, Mendocino, CA 95460.

August 1-3 Pipestem, WV

For an old time mountain music festival, PIPESTEM offers concerts and workshops at the Folklife Center. Info: David Stanley, P.O. Box 10, Pipestem, WV 25979. 304/466-0626.

August 2-3 Ferrisburg, VT

the 3RD CHAMPLAIN VALLEY FESTIVAL will be held at Kingsland Bay State Park and offers traditional music, dance, and crafts. Info: Champlain Valley Festival, P.O. Box 401, Burlington, VT 05401. 802/849-6968.

August 7-9 Asheville, NC

The 59TH ANNUAL MOUNTAIN DANCE AND FOLK FESTIVAL will feature traditional mountain string bands, bluegrass, smooth and clog dancing, ballads, dulcimers, buck dancing, yarn spinning, dance and band competition. Info: Jackie Ward, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1011, Asheville, NC 28802. 800-548-1300 (NC), 800-257-1300 (East), 704/258-3916.

August 15-17 Cosby, TN

The 15TH ANNUAL FOLK FESTIVAL OF THE SMOKIES will feature workshops for all levels, children's activities, folk games, mini-concerts, and evening stage concerts. Info: Folk Life Center of the Smokies, P.O. Box 8, Cosby, TN 37722. 615/487-5543.

August 15-17 Milwaukee, WI

The IRISH FEST, held at the Summerfest grounds on Lake Michigan, features cultural exhibits, contests, parades, children's

kentucky music weekend

7 Day Celebration!

July 28-August 1

Week long instruction in:

- Dulcimer
- Hammered Dulcimer
- Instrument Building
- Dancing • Singing
- Story Telling • Crafts
- Tin Whistle & much more

Nationally known instructors

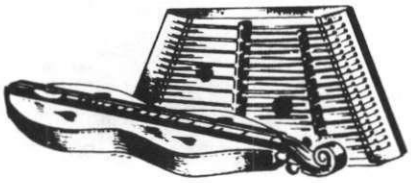
August 1-3

Weekend Concerts
Workshops
Dances
Crafts
On site camping

For further information please contact —
Nancy Barker • P.O. Box 651 •
Bardstown, KY 40004 • (502) 348-5237

September
18, 19, 20, 21, 1986
WINFIELD, KANSAS
FAIRGROUNDS

National Mountain
Dulcimer
Championship
September 19th



National Hammered
Dulcimer
Championship
September 20th

Workshops
$3800
in Cash Prizes
and
Prize Instruments by
Luthiers

Harvey L. Prinz
Lynn McSpadden
Donald A. Round
Russell Cook

Write for more information

walnut valley association, inc.

P.O. Box 245 918 Main Phone (316) 221-3250
Winfield, Kansas 67156

events, ceili dancing, bagpiping, Irish and American foods, and concerts. Info: Irish Fest, Box 599, Milwaukee, WI 53201. 414/466-6640.

August 30-31 Buena Vista, CO

The HIGH COUNTRY FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL will feature entertainment and sales of traditional arts and crafts. The festival will host the Colorado Hammer and Mountain Dulcimer Championships. Info: Box 28, Buena Vista, CO 81211. 303/395-8419, 395-6612.

August 30-31 Brandywine, MD

The 4TH ANNUAL FALL MUSICAL WEEKEND at Cedarville State Park will feature workshops for fretted and hammered dulcimers, Autoharp, bands, shape note singing and more. Open stage, gospel sing. Camping. Info: Keith Young, 3815 Kendale Rd., Annandale, VA 22003. 703/941-1071.

Aug. 30-Sept. 1 Northern CA Mts.

EEL RIVER CAMP-OUT WORKSHOPS feature instruction in singing, guitar, mountain and hammer dulcimers, fiddle, banjo and more. Info: Kicking Mule Records, P.O. Box 158, Alderpoint, CA 95411. 707/926-5312.

August 31 Malvern, OH

The GREAT TRAIL FESTIVAL will be held during two weekends—Aug. 23-24 and 30-31, Sept. 1. The Appalachian dulcimer contest will be held on Aug. 31st. Also featured are workshops and dulcimer makers. Info: Great Trail Festival Assoc., P.O. Box 552, Malvern, OH 44644. 216/794-9100.

Aug. 29-Sept. 1 Avoca, IA

The 11TH NATIONAL OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL, held at the Pottawattamie County Fairgrounds, will feature a mid-west dulcimer playing championship along with old-time traditional acoustic music and workshops. Info: Bob Everhart, 106 Navajo, Council Bluffs, IA 51501. 712/366-1136.

September 18-21 Winfield, KS

The 15TH ANNUAL WALNUT VALLEY FESTIVAL will be held at the fairgrounds. The festival features contests including mountain and hammer dulcimer, arts and crafts fair, workshops, and concerts. Info: Bob Redford, P.O. Box 245, Winfield, KS 67156. 316/221-3250.

September 21 Huntsville, AL

The 4TH ANNUAL NORTH ALABAMA DULCIMER FESTIVAL will be held at the Lions Club Park in Meridianville, AL. Features jamming, sales booths, and a concert. Info: Wayne H. Taylor, P.O. Box 325, Meridianville, AL 35759. 205/828-0004.

September 26-27 Pineville, KY

The 10TH ANNUAL GREAT AMERICAN DULCIMER CONVENTION will be held at Pine Mountain State Resort Park. Mini-concerts will be held as well as workshops on both the fretted and hammer dulcimers. Info: Rick Fuller, Pine Mt. State Resort Park, Pineville, KY 40977. 606/337-3066.

September 26-28 Winsted, CT

The AUTUMN HILLS DULCIMER FESTIVAL will be held at Camp Sequassen near Winsted and features workshops, dances, and concerts. Info: Autumn Hills Dulcimer Festival, Box 807, Winsted, CT 06098. 203/379-9857.

October 3-5 Fort Worth, TX

The ACOUSTIC MUSIC WEEKEND will be held at Camp Carter in Fort Worth, featuring more than 50 workshops and 12 hours of concerts. Camping, cabins, recreational facilities. Info: Russell Cook, 1513 Baker Rd., Burleson, TX 76028. 817/478-6339.

October 19 Dennis, MS

DULCIMER DAY will be held at the Tishomingo State Park at 1:30 p.m. There will be scheduled performances and jam sessions along with sales booths. Info: Hollis Long, Box 76, Golden, MS 38847.

Where are we Now?
Where are we Going?

Thank you for your response to our request for DPN ideas. I knew hammer dulcimer players would want more articles/arrangements for that instrument; that builders would want more building tips and fretted dulcimer players would wonder, nicely, why we devote so much space to building and hammer dulcimer information! Of course you know we are a small publication without bureaus in various sections of the country. Nonetheless, I am as aware as possible about a mixture of articles featuring both instruments, men and women players player and builders, areas of the country, and traditional/contemporary playing styles. We also wish to provide information about books, clubs, schools, workshops, and festivals that, although not specifically for the dulcimer, probably include other musical interests of yours.

For our future, two DPN friends have talked with us about helping with microfilming our magazine and with a book of arrangements which have appeared in back issues. More about this later.

This is probably the time to assure you about the future of the Dulcimer Players News. Magazines do have a way of coming and going! Please don't worry about us. We've been around for more than eleven years and we plan to be around for many more. Along with my editorial philosophies for DPN, there is a large guiding monetary policy: if we don't have the money, we don't expand or do whatever else might be considered cosmetic. Our purpose, in my book, is the dissemination of information in as attractive a format as possible. We run this magazine on a cash basis, and feel more comfortable with that situation. Now to some of your specific ideas which we are happy to consider.

We've formed a new dulcimer club in this area and would like to know what other clubs do at their meetings, what long and short term goals they are aiming for, etc. Perhaps you could ask all the clubs to send you letters telling about their meetings and condense this into a 2 or 3 part article, or publish several letters in each issue of DPN.

Teresa Stovall
Augusta, KS

As a player of both fretted and hammer dulcimers, I enjoy the songs DPN publishes each quarter. I wonder if there is any way the songs could be incorporated into the magazine so as to be a pull-out feature (a-la centerfold, or in a format so they could be pulled out and put into a loose-leaf notebook). Another idea would be to publlish a DPN Song Collection every year or so, containing songs and accompanying notes and explanations that have appeared in DPN. The collection could be in loose-leaf form for incorporation into the subscribers' own 3-ring binder. DPN might consider marketing a binder also!

Linda Hubbard
Bethesda, MD

4th Autumn Hills Dulcimer Festival

SEPTEMBER 26, 27 & 28, 1986

Neal Hellman • Leo Kretzner • John McCutcheon
Jean Ritchie • Paul Van Arsdale
No Strings Attached

Formal Concerts • Mini-Concerts
Beginner - Intermediate Workshops • Master's Workshops
Contra Dancing

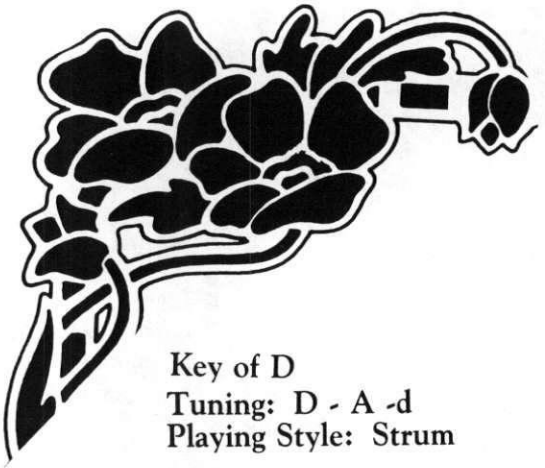
Full Weekend Ticket $30.00
(Advanced registration suggested)

The setting is beautiful Camp Sequassen, a 530 acre facility on West Hill Lake near Winsted, CT

FREE ON SITE CAMPING & LEAN-TOS
Bunk Space Good Food Canoes & Row Boats available
All events will be held indoors in case of inclement weather

Write or call for registration forms or additional information.

AUTUMN HILLS - BOX 807, Winsted, CT 06098
(203) 379-9857 Telephone during the festival (203) 379-8009

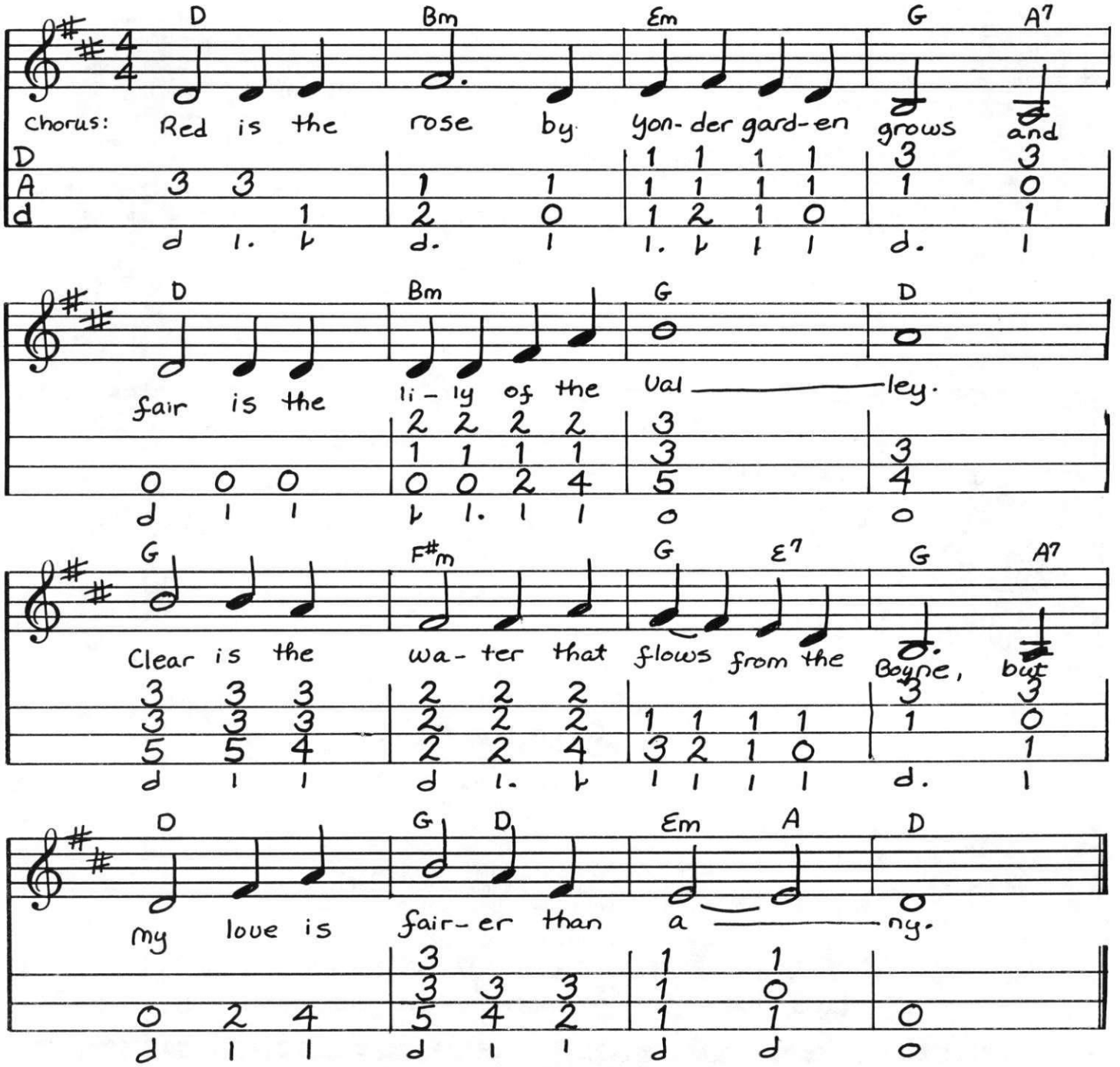


Red Is The Rose

arr. Lois Hornbostel
Monroe, North Carolina

Key of D
Tuning: D - A -d
Playing Style: Strum

Traditional Irish Song

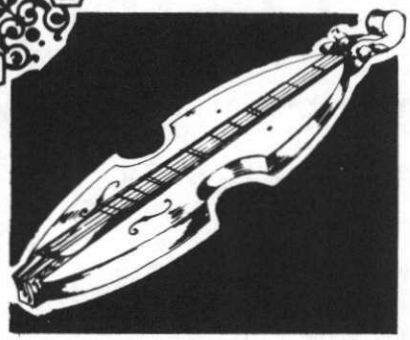


The Whitby Folk Festival in Yorkshire, England, takes place in auditoriums, drill halls, boat houses and pubs throughout the town. Although primarily an instrumentalist at the time, I found my favorite events were the all-night sings at a pub called the Cutty Sark. This is one of the songs I learned there. The air is the Scottish *Loch Lomond,* but they sang it without Scots snap, in a steady tempo, with what might be called "militant fervor". You can strum all the notes or flatpick with passing tones if you like. This song has a good sampling of the chords in D-A-d tuning, colored differently from the traditional *Loch Lomond*. O's are omitted from the tablature except when they are the melody notes.

Verses: (same tune as chorus)

'Twas down by Kilarney's green woods that we strayed,
And the moon and the stars they were shining
The moon shone its rays on her locks of golden hair,
And she swore she'd be my love forever.
(Repeat chorus)

It's not for the parting that my sister pains.
It's not for the grief of my mother.
It is all for the loss of my bonnie Irish lass
That my heart is breaking forever.
(Repeat chorus)



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There is a Season/Bob Thomason, P.O. Box 570, Helen, GA 30545 • This cassette tape features fretted dulcimer instrumental solos such as *Boys of Blue Hill, Greensleeves, Beauty in Tears* and *Carolan's Welcome/Star of County Down.*

Hit or Miss/Mick Doherty, P.O. Box 18181, Portland, OR 97218 • Mick's cassette tape features hammer dulcimer instrumentals *(Tom Morrison's Reel/Toss the Feathers* and *Magpie/Leather Britches,* for example) with guitar, fiddle, and second dulcimer backup.

Potpourri/Various Artists, Dancing Doll Music, Box 68, Mountain View, AR 72560 • Fretted dulcimer players such as Jean Simmons Jennings, Elliott Hancock and Pam Gavin got together in solos, duets and one quartet for this album featuring instrumental music. The tunes, including *Lady Mary, Black Rogue, Lost Indian,* and *Amazing Grace,* provide help for people wanting to play along by giving the tuning for each selection.

Harmonic Tremors/The Epicenter Stringband, c/o Lawrence Huntley, 9625 Lewis La., Tigard, OR 97223 • This cassette tape features arrangements for hammer dulcimer, fiddle and guitar on such tunes as *Stone's Rag, Land O' Lincoln* and *Give Me Your Hand.* Traditional and original compositions.

Cool of the Day/Trapezoid, Sugar Hill, P.O. Box 4040, Duke Station, Durham, NC 27706 • Trapezoid's celebration of ten years of performing is part of the reason for this album. Trapezoid members, Paul Reisler, Lorraine Duisit, Freyda Epstein, and Ralph Gordon are joined by Tom Jones, Howard Levy, Layne Redmond, Glen Velez, and Tom Espinola on a collection of original compositions.

Metamora/Metamora, Sugar Hill, P.O. Box 4040, Duke Station, Durham, NC 27706 • Metamora is Malcolm Dalglish, Grey Larsen, and Pete Sutherland. Their new album features instrumentals (hammer dulcimer, percussion, flutes, guitar, piano, fiddle) and vocals on original compositions.

The Folk Festival Book/S. Johnson and S. Oberman, Turnstone Press, 201-99 King St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B-1H7 • The authors have created a picture of the annual Winnipeg Folk Festival through words and photos in this 138 page book.

Patchwork/Carol Stober, Box 1275, Talladega, AL 35160 • Although Carol Stober is a fretted dulcimer player, this cassette tape features her work on the Autoharp, guitar, and as a vocalist. Accompanying musicians play bowed psaltery, guitar, piano and bass.

Jogging The Memory/Malcolm Dalglish, Windom Hill Records, Box 9388, Stanford, CA 94305 • Malcolm's Windom Hill record is also available on cassette tape and compact disc. His original compositions are played on solo hammer dulcimer.

Taliesin's Daughter/Karen Bruner, Songbird Unlimited, P.O. Box 10609, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 • This 90-minute cassette tape features original compositions on celtic harp with voice and flute accompaniment.

Confluence/Lee Spears and Christopher Deane, Thistlegate Productions, Route 1, Box 408, Salisbury, NC 28144 • "Confluence" is a cassette tape featuring original and traditional instrumentals played on two hammer dulcimers with guitar, flutes, violin and cello.

A Dulcimer Holiday/Just Friends, c/o Lori Cleland, 3477 Ardreth St., Drayton Plains, MI 48020 • Rosemary Kornacki, Lori Cleland, Judi Morningstar, and Cecelia Webster recorded this cassette tape using hammer dulcimer, harp, guitar, banjo, and bass. Selections include *The Entertainer, Michigan Saturday Night, Fur Elise* and *Cherry Tree Carol.*

Just In Time/Gail Rundlett, Heartwood Records, 77 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, MA 02172 • This cassette tape features Gail on dulcimer, guitar, and vocals along with accompanying musicians Leo Kretzner, Rick Cyge, Amie Beth Doft, Larry Unger, Rick and Lorraine Lee and a Kids Chorus. Selections include both traditional and original material.

Beginning Appalachian Dulcimer and **Dynamic Dulcimer**/Mark Nelson, Lark In The Morning, 7348 Adams, Talent, OR 97540 • These one-hour video tape lessons feature basic playing instruction and advanced techniques plus demonstrations of music played on the Swedish hummel, Hungarian citera, and French epinette that can be played on the Appalachian dulcimer.

Twenty-One Fiddle Tunes/Mark Nelson, 7348 Adams Rd., Talent, OR 97540 • This book, written in tablature and musical notation, presents fiddle tunes from the United States, Canada and the British Isles arranged for fretted dulcimer. The arrangements, with all of the notes and in the correct keys as played by fiddlers, range from easy to challenging.

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All are members of the Greater Pinelands Dulcimer Society, which Rich and Mary helped start over six years ago. The Sunday Circle has performed for many campgrounds, local churches, historical organizations and festivals. They have also done workshops on playing the dulcimer in ensemble situations. In 1985 the group traveled to Louisville for the Kentucky Music Week Celebration.

Many of the group members play other instruments such as hammer dulcimer, Autoharp, limberjack, banjo, spoons and washtub bass. The Carty children, Steven and Jason, sometimes play or sing along with the group. The Sunday Circle enjoys group participation and likes to get the audience involved by clapping, singing, or volunteering to play the limberjack.

The members like to share the music and enjoy being together. Since they get together on Sunday nights and sit in a half circle while jamming, the name Sunday Circle was obvious! Members are Richard and Mary Carty, Linda Curtsinger, Linda Rigsbee, and Carol Ann Sweet.

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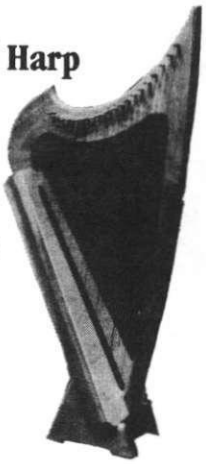

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The Hammer Dulcimer in Canada

by Christy Cook
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

For those who regard Canada as the fifty-first state, the discovery that Canadian folk music is distinctly different from that south of the border comes as a surprise. From the infectious music of Newfoundland and Quebec, to the prairie homesteading songs of Alberta to the music of the loggers and fishermen of British Columbia, the folk music of Canada is being increasingly valued as a unique resouce. Since before the turn of the century, this rich diversity of musical styles has been influenced by the influx of many immigrant groups coming to this country. The resulting milieu has not been a bland concoction of "generic" music, but a musical stew punctuated by a wide array of distinctive flavors. As an American dulcimer player making my home in Canada for nearly four years, I'm still just beginning to sample the musical delights here—all this in a country of only 25 million people!

The hammer dulcimer is known to many who came to Canada from Asia, eastern Europe, The Middle East, and Britain; yet, to my knowledge, its presence during the early settlement of Canada is unknown. As Nancy Groce noted in her excellent book, *The Hammered Dulcimer in America*, there are several references to the instrument in colonial America. It seems very likely that the dulcimer also came to Canada during colonization, since it was played in many European countries, including Britain, during that time. The final tantalizing bit of evidence from this era is provided by the many American Loyalists who were opposed to independence from England and subsequently fled to Canada. Did these people bring the dulcimer to Ontario and Quebec? Seeking the answer would be an intriguing pursuit.

The nineteenth century saw the flourishing of the dulcimer in the US. Nancy Groce refers to a dulcimer builder in upstate New York who sent traveling salesmen to Canada with his instruments to sell. How many of those instruments are hidden in attics in southern Ontario? Did the playing of the dulcimer in that area die out after only a few years? So many unknowns are begging to be investigated.

The dulcimer tradition is being preserved most noticeably in Canada by immigrant groups from eastern Europe—Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Rumanians. The instrument has played a major role in the folk music of those groups for several centuries, a role that has remained intact in Canada despite the influence of western music. Unaware of the phenomenal revival of the dulcimer taking place in the US, these eastern European players continue to pass their tunes and playing styles down from generation to generation in much the same manner as they did in the "Old Country". This fact underscores a major difference between Canada and the US: in the US the dulcimer is mainly a "revivalist" instrument, but in Canada it is primarily an instrument of "tradition-bearers" from various immigrant groups. The largest of these groups, and one in which the dulcimer tradition is maintained, is the Ukrainian population.

My exposure to the Ukrainian populations in western Canada has prompted me to learn about the dulcimer's role in their music. Let me first say that very little has been done to collect and document the dulcimer's traditions and music in any of the groups who have brought the instrument to Canada, and the Ukrainians are no exception. My information comes from a small number of readings, but mostly from conversations with Ukrainian dulcimer builders and players, and from listening to their music whenever I can.

The Ukrainian dulcimer is known as the cymbally, or tsimbaly (both pronounced as TSIM-BALL-UH). A trio consisting of a violin, sopilka (flute), and a cymbaly performs at weddings and dances, and is most likely the oldest and most traditional configuration in which the instrument is played in the Ukraine. In this group, the cymbaly provides an improvised rhythmic accompaniment for the violin and sopilka. Nowadays, the instrument is increasingly seen in large orchestras providing music for the well-known, flamboyant Ukrainian dance troupes which tour world-wide. Only in recent years have players begun playing melodies on the cymbaly, and it is rarely used as a solo instrument. The verkhovyno, kolomyika, hopak, waltz, and polka are the most common types of cymbaly tunes.

The cymbaly is a trapezoidal-shaped dulcimer with usually six strings per course, a treble bridge in fifth-interval tuning, and a bass bridge. It is usually played on the lap with relatively short wooden hammers held in the eastern European manner, between the index and third fingers. Many Ukrainian builders decorate the soundboards with brightly painted flowers. The cymbaly is tuned in a variety of different ways. The instruments built by Roam Tykajlo have the following tuning scheme, which is commonly found in Manitoba and Alberta.

e'	a	
d#'	g#	c (middle c)
d'	g	b,
c#'	f#	b,♭
c	f	a,
b	e	g,
b♭ (a#)	d#	f#,
a	d	f,
g	c (middle c)	e,
g#	c#	d,
f#	b,	c,

Ukrainian dulcimers built in the most traditional way share a unique feature, a small, square hole cut in the corner of the soundboard. This hole is apparently an adaptation for traditional weddings, in which the cymbaly player sits by the door playing beautiful Ukrainian tunes. As the guests enter, they drop coins in that hole, making the cymbaly the only known musical instrument which doubles as a piggy bank!

A brief description of the Ukraine and the various waves of immigrants coming to Canada helps to place the cymbaly in the proper cultural perspective. The Ukraine, situated in the southwestern part of the USSR, with Kiev as it capital, is divided in half by the Dnieper River. For years the borders have been disputed, and parts of the Ukraine have been claimed by Romania, Hungary, and Poland. The Ukraine has unsuccessfully attempted to establish itself as an independent nation for several centuries, yet nationalism continues to burn strongly, especially among Ukrainian-Canadians. (The worst insult for a Ukrainian is to be called a Russian!).

Three waves of Ukrainian immigrants have settled in Canada; the first wave, from the 1890's to 1900, and the second wave in the 1930's, comprise the majority of cymbaly players. Many of them are wheat farmers who came from the western Ukraine regions of Bukovinia and Galicia. Having settled on farms in western Canada, these immigrants have retained much of the language and folklore traditions of the Old Country. The third wave of immigrants left the Ukraine after WW II and settled mainly in Canadian cities such as Toronto and Montreal, where they could easily find jobs.

Very few, if any, of these later immigrants brought the cymbaly to Canada. Two possible reasons are: 1. the instrument was becoming more scarce in the turmoil of war, and 2. the immigrants were forced to quickly flee, and so could not bring such bulky instruments with them. As a result, most of the Ukrainians familiar with the cymbaly in Canada are elderly. The majority of cymbaly builders are old, and many are dead. Roman Tykajlo of Calgary, Alberta, is the only young person that I know who is building the instrument. However, the cymbaly is being played by at least a small number of young Ukrainians. As the younger generations learn of the hardships of their people, in both the past and present, they take a renewed interest in the Ukrainian culture. By becoming members in one of the many well-known Ukrainian-Canadian dance groups or by learning to play the bandura or cymbaly, the young people are expressing pride in their Ukrainian-ness. If nationalistic feelings continue to filter down to younger Ukrainian generations in Canada, then the survival of their beautiful folk arts, including the cymbaly, will be assured.

During recent years, cymbaly competitions have become popular at several large Ukrainian festivals in western Canada, most notably in Dauphin, Manitoba; Vegreville, Alberta (noted for its gigantic painted Ukrainian egg perched above the town); and in Edmonton, Alberta. These festivals are a celebration of the Ukrainian culture, complete with ethnic food, crafts, and dances. For example, the cymbaly competition is the main event at the Red Barn Festival in Edmonton, Alberta, sponsored by CFCW, a popular country-western radio station. The 1974 competition was recorded, and the resulting disc, *Award Winning Dulcimer Sounds*, is commercially available.

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The largest festival, held in Dauphin, is over 20 years old, and attracts upwards of 20,000 people from across Canada and the US. The cymbaly competition often includes 25 or more entrants, ranging in age from eight to eighty! The incentive for playing one's flashiest tunes is provided by the large cheering sections of family and friends, as well as the $1200 prize money. Past contestants have performed such feats as playing a piece upside down from the opposite side of the instrument, or playing a tune with a white sheet covering the strings.

Ukrainian music in Canada has been influenced by North American music, especially country music, yet the cymbaly's presence gives it a distinctive Ukrainian flavor. Throughout western Canada, many Ukrainian bands perform at dances and weddings. These groups often use a cymbaly with guitars, drums, accordians, and sometimes a saxophone. Lively polkas and kolomyikas are played with the cymbaly hammering out a spirited rhythmic accompaniment. The dulcimer's adaptability, which has insured its survival for centuries, will also enable future Ukrainian generations to enjoy its sweet sound.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Noella Ostash and Roman Tykajlo for sharing their considerable knowledge of the Ukrainian dulcimer with me. Information was also obtained from the following publications:

The Western Canadian Championships: Tsymbaly competitions at the Red Barn, by Mark J. Bandera, The Canadian Folk Music Journal, vol. 11, 1983

The Hammered Dulcimer in America, by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology, Number 44, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, 1983

Note: I would like to learn more about eastern European dulcimers in North America. Please write to me at P.O. Box 7513, Station E, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T3C-3M3.

The Canadian Folk Music Society has done a wonderful job of collecting folk music across the country. The Society publishes an annual journal, a quarterly journal, and a new mail-order catalogue of hundreds of Canadian folk music recordings. Write to them at CFMS, P.O. Box 4232, Station C, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2T-5N1.

Christy and Fred Cook have an album of traditional Celtic, Ukrainian, and Elizabethan music played on four hammer dulcimers, plus a variety of other instruments. This album, Just A Minuet, *and their cassette tape* Molly's Welcome *are available from them at the above address.*

Correction for the spring 1986 issue of *Dulcimer Players News* article on Ted Carr: Mitzie Collins lives in Rochester, New York. The editor/typesetter went to graduate school in Rochester, Michigan and was probably struck with some momentary nostalgia.

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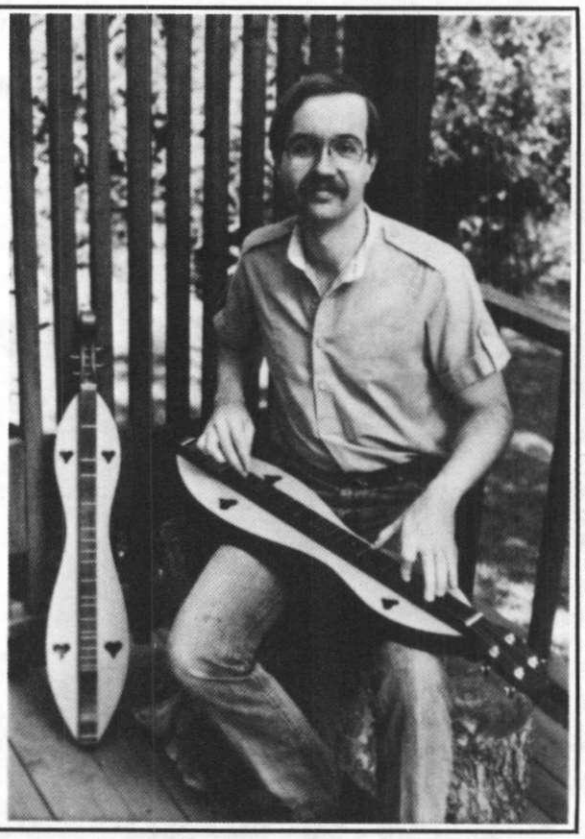

No Strings Attached

Creators of "Folk Music of the Future"

by Mitzie Collins
Rochester, New York

No Strings Attached is a five-member multi-dulcimer band based in southwest Virginia that performs an eclectic repertoire of traditional, popular and original material. With three albums out and a fourth currently being recorded, No Strings Attached still has four of its original members and miantains its own early-established custom of performing a varied repertoire. The broad spectrum of material and styles is influenced by the diverse backgrounds of the musicians and their combined ability to play some fourteen different instruments.

The group evolved from Wes Chappell's chance hearing of John McCutcheon at Union Grove, North Carolina, in 1976. Wes, who played the piano, mandolin, harmonica, and flute, was already a veteran of rock bands, jug bands, bluegrass and country-rock bands, and was immediately taken with the instrument. He soon purchased a hammered dulcimer build by Pete Vigour, one of the original members of Trapezoid. Wes played the dulcimer at practice sessions of the Blacksburg Virginia Cloggers, where Randy Marchany, whose musical background included classical training in piano, just "fell in love with the sound." By 1978 Randy had his own Pete Vigour instrument and informally played with Wes and with Pete Hastings, guitar and harmonica player, who had been a musical partner of Wes's for many years. In early 1979 Randy proudly showed off his new instrument in the home of one of his professors at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg. There the professor's daughter, Suzy Gorsline Irwin, heard it and just "had to have one." She recalls, "My mother's reaction was 'Oh my god, not again', because I already played the piano, Autoharp and recorder." Suzy joined the group and soon an accordianist and bass player were added. In August of 1980 this aggregation of musicians was invited to play at a small crafts fair at Claytor Lake and felt they needed a title. As Suzy puts it, "We decided we should be called something other than 'that funny band with weird instruments'." thus was No Strings Attached officially created.

Some six years later the band is still creating folk-fusion music and is performing regularly for diverse audiences at craft fairs, wedding receptions and clubs, with the occasional festival, such as the 1985 Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering, thrown in. A fall 1986 tour of the West Coast is in the planning stages. None of the band count on music for their total income, and most of the five members return performance fees to a common kitty which underwrites transportation to jobs and the initial costs of making a record. The band's motivation for playing is the sheer enjoyment of creating music. Wes says, "We haven't had any major personality conflicts. Everybody in the band is pretty easy going." Randy points out that "Personnel changes in the band have been brought about by job or school changes, and with each new member the band's total experience expands. Our new bass player, Bob Thomas, plays in a small symphony as well as in a jazz and blues band."

When asked to describe their music, Randy calls it "Else-where-ish music from elsewhere." A typical way to work out an arrangement would begin with a band member bringing a tune to one of the weekly rehearsals. Wes says, "Sometimes, if it's my original tune, I work out everybody's part exactly as I want it done. Other times, I throw the melody and the chords out and everybody else works out the way they want to do it. When it sounds good we say, 'Okay, that's it'." The tunes, but not the complete arrangements, eventually get written down, with the band continually making changes until they reach the recording studio. Randy comments, "Whatever we finally do on an album is basically the arrangement we stick to, though we may vary things slightly in performances."

The most distinctive part of the No Strings Attached sound is the hammered dulcimer playing. The three players, Randy, Wes and Suzy, have developed a common style which rests on their ability to use each hand independently, their skill in creating wide dynamic variations and their penchant for playing poly-rhythmically. Central to the music they choose is the fact that their dulcimers are all chromatic. Randy comments, "It's really the builders who have opened up new possibilities by making chromatic dulcimers." The instruments they play now include Randy's Sam Rizzetta prototype for the Dusty Strings concert model, Suzy's Rizzetta, which is a compact chromatic model, and Wes's Rizzetta Augusta Grand, made by Nick Blanton.

No Strings Attached members see themselves still creating music together five years down the road. Wes claims, "I'll always be playing music, somewhere," and Randy comments that he "Just keeps looking to the next project and the next album." As the re-pressings of their albums attest, there is an eager audience for their spicy blend of traditional and original music; an audience that no doubt hopes No String Attached will be around for a long time.

Booking information: Wes Chappell, 1140 Howbert Street, Roanoke, VA 24015. 703/989-2890.

Mitzie Collins, a frequent contributor to "Dulcimer Players News", performs and records her music. Her most recent album is "Ornaments", a Christmas album featuring hammer dulcimer and harp. Her partner on the album is Roxanne Ziegler.

Albums by No Strings Attached include Traditional Music of the Future *(Turquoise Records) and Isles of Langerhans.*

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More Dulcimer Organizations

Corrections & Changes

Corrected Listing
Indian Territory Dulcimer Celebration
P.O. Box 471532
Tulsa, OK 74147
918/627-2196

Listing Change
Central Indiana Folk Music &
Mt. Dulcimer Society
P.O. Box 1503
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Additions

Alabama

So. App. Dulcimer Association
Emmett M. Groves
5313 Quincy Ave.
Birmingham, AL 35208
205/923-8645

Ala-Sippi Dulcimer Association
Archie Lee
Route 3, Box 494
Red Bay, AL 35582

Colorado

Columbine Hammered Dul. Soc.
Mike Gowan
7030 W. 38th Ave. #2
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
303/420-2351

Illinois

Champaign-Urbana Dulcimer Soc.
804 W. Vermont
Urbana, IL 61801
217/367-1359

Kentucky

Lexington Folk Singing Group
Ruth Blackburn
1880-A Dalton Court
Lexington, KY 40505
606/299-7133

Maryland

Chesapeake Hammered Dulcimer Soc.
Pete Benson
7505-D Weather Worn Way
Columbia, MD 21046
301/381-2219

Minnesota

Woodland Strings Dulcimer Club
Len Sharon
104 SE 8th St.
Little Falls, MN 56345
612/632-8608

North Carolina

Western NC Dulcimer Collective
Joy Metcalf
Route 1, Box 306-B
Fletcher, NC 28732

Ohio

Columbus Dulcimer Club
198 Murnane Street
Westerville, OH 43081
614/471-6157

West Virginia

Tri-State Mt. Dulcimer Soc.
(WV, KY, OH)
Huntington, WV
304/886-8125

Wisconsin

Mountain Dulcimer Gatherings
Marguerite Skotzke
612 Fairview Ave.
So. Milwaukee, WI 53172
414/764-1133

Japan

Japan Dulcimer Club
Attn: Iguchi
4-108, 262-32. Kamigo-Cho
Totsuka-Ku
Kokohama 247, Japan
045-893-9749

The first dulcimer festival held in Japan happened on June 22, 1986. The event included workshops and concerts featuring hammer and fretted dulcimers. We hope to get pictures for a future issue.

Are we missing anyone? If, between the 1986 spring and summer issues, you are not listed, you are officially missing. We want a complete list to assist us with updates next year and to provide dulcimer players with colleagues and teachers. Please help us with information.

Miscellaneous Measures

Cindi Baehr
46 Pleasant St.
Stoneham, MA 02180

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THE KITCHEN MUSICIAN'S OCCASIONAL FOR HAMMER DULCIMER, ETC.: Booklets in standard notation and Sam Rizzetta's tablature. No. 1, Waltzes; No. 2, Mountain Tunes (no tab); No. 3, O'Carolan Tunes; No. 6, Jigs; 11 pp. each, $2.50 ppd or all 4 for $9.00. No. 4, Fine Tunes, has 32 old standards, 16 pp., $3.50 ppd. No. 5, Mostly Irish Airs, has more Carolan tunes and airs, 16 pp., $3.50 ppd. Sara Johnson, 449 Hidden Valley, Cincinnati, OH 45215.

It's Refreshing! **Angel's Draught** by Carrie Crompton with the Barolk Folk. Traditional, Baroque and Renaissance music for hammer dulcimer, viol, guitar and recorders. You'll play it over and over. $8.98. Also Available: **Princess Royal** cassette featuring fetted and hammer dulcimer solos by Carrie Crompton. $7.98. And a new book: **Hammer Dulcimer Solos,** also by Carrie. Arrangements of traditional, Baroque and Renaissance pieces. Emphasis is on chords, both rolled and arpeggiated, with detailed hammering guides. Beautiful calligraphy. $9.98. Add $1.25 shipping for first item, 50¢ for each additional item. Hepatica Music, 119 Clover Road, State College, PA 16801.

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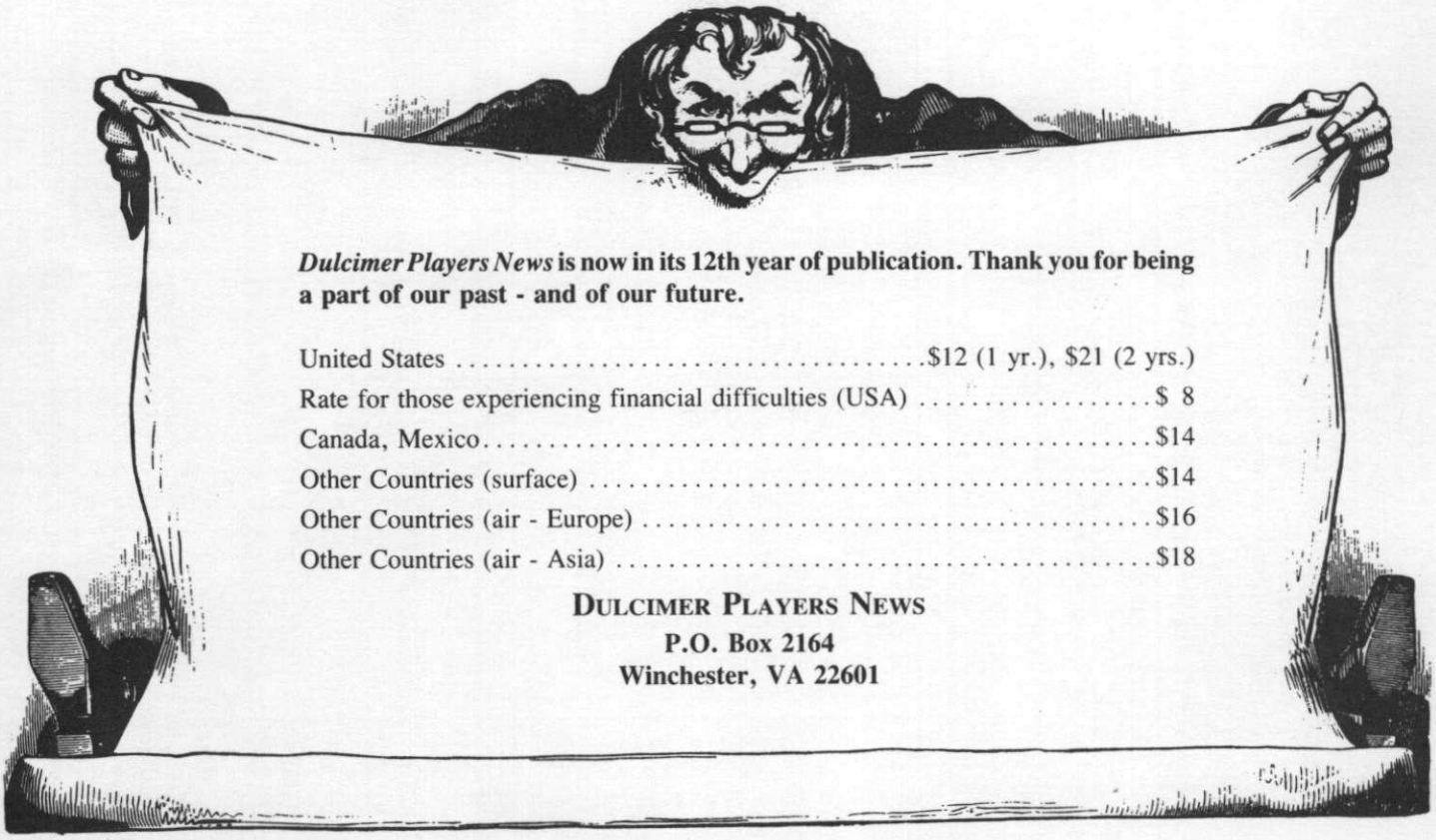

***Dulcimer Players News* is now in its 12th year of publication. Thank you for being a part of our past - and of our future.**

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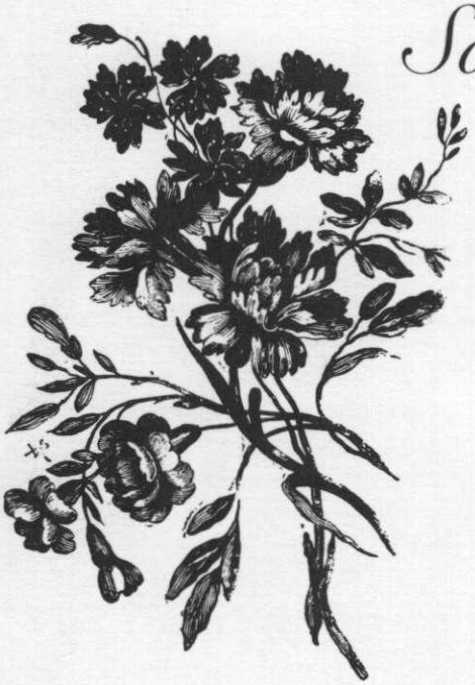

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